# The New REPUBLIC

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## The Week

ALTHOUGH Premier MacDonald, the British Labor party, and many of the Liberal members of Parliament are willing to concede to the United States the principle of complete "freedom of the seas" for neutral commerce in wartime, except when a blockade is internationally agreed upon, press reports state that the subject of sea law is not to be discussed in the coming disarmament conferences with the United States. This decision was reached, apparently, at the suggestion of our government. Doubtless Mr. Hoover and the State Department have in mind the nervous opposition of the Senate to anything savoring of international naval coöperation, and doubt if they could persuade that body to agree in advance to give up the traditional American interpretation of freedom of the seas even in the event of a League blockade. We hope sincerely that an agreement for substantial naval reduction can be achieved without any previous understanding on sea law. But if it should, by any mischance, happen that the British are not willing to go as far in reducing as Mr. Hoover desires because of their uncertainty concerning the possible use of the United States navy in some future international blockade, or if our own naval authorities should oppose reduction because they contemplate a future necessity of running such a blockade, it will be well to remember that the principal fault lies with ourselves. Apparently Great Britain is much more nearly ready to make her share of the mutual concessions which must underlie a new understanding on sea law than we are to make our share.

THE most important action yet taken by the new Labor government in Great Britain is the decision to accept the "optional clause" of the World Court. The phrase is misleading; Article 36 of the World Court statute might better be called "the compulsory clause," since it imposes on those states which accept it the obligation to use the Court's services in any legal dispute with any other power. Such legal disputes are those dealing with the interpretations of treaties, disputes over international law, and matters relating to the breach of international obligations. If the MacDonald government accepts Article 36, Great Britain will be the first of the large, heavily armed powers to agree to what is virtually compulsory arbitration. Germany has accepted Clause 36, but Germany has only a skeleton army and navy, and is in no better position to enforce her will than are the forty-three small countries which have hastened to obtain the protection of the clause. France has suggested that she will agree to use the Court in disputes with other countries which have themselves adopted Article 36. Japan will accept it when everyone else does. Italy says nothing. The United States seems unlikely to accept it, although the new Pan-American treaties of conciliation and arbitration, signed last January in Washington, look in the same direction. No better proof of pacific intent could be given than the MacDonald government has furnished by announcing its intention. It is a policy which Americans devoted to the cause of international good will can only applaud—and envy.

THE Morgan merger of the power companies in northern New York, to be followed soon, according to rumor, by another consisting of those in and


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about New York City, appears as if the utility promoters and financiers were making hay while the sun shines. The movement to investigate the regulation of public utilities, started by Governor Roosevelt last winter, has come to nothing. Instead of the small and expert commission which he wanted, the Republican legislature forced upon him a larger body with limited powers, of which he could appoint only a minority; its members have never been named. The Governor's plan for state development of the St. Lawrence power is in abeyance, not having been accepted by the Legislature. Clearly, the utilities are moving rapidly to strengthen their position, while the Republican machine sees to it that the state does nothing, in the hope that next time a Republican governor will be elected, who will favor private power. Mr. Roosevelt is well advised to look into the situation. And it may not be impertinent to inquire where Mr. Owen D. Young stands on this question. He supported Governor Smith's power plan, which was the forerunner of Governor Roosevelt's; he is in an influential business position through his connection with the General Electric and his association with Mr. J. P. Morgan. His utterances have always been public-spirited and his present prestige is high, on account of the reparations settlement. If he is not playing the game of those who oppose the public interest in power, he ought to rise to the occasion.

THE annual report of the Department of Commerce on the balance of international payments of the United States in 1928 makes no important revelations that were not contained in the reports of previous years. In our case, the "invisible" items of trade—such as tourists' expenditures, immigrants' remittances and loans and investments—are of so great a size that they affect the balance fully as much as the visible items, such as export and import of goods and gold. This is the reason why, in spite of the fact that the War changed us overnight from a debtor to a creditor nation, we still have what is traditionally but absurdly called a "favorable" trade balance—that is, a surplus of exports over imports. If, for any reason, tourists from Europe to the United States should become as numerous and extravagant as our vacationers across the Atlantic, and if our foreign lending should become much smaller, while the loans were being paid off, we should undoubtedly have a surplus of imports. All this is clear enough to anyone who has kept a cash book. The balance of payment across international boundaries must be maintained; enlarged entries on the debit side mean enlarged entries on the credit side. One puzzling section of the report, however, implies that the record of the United States in this respect shows that there is no need to worry about the problem of Germany and other European nations in transferring reparations and war debts. It is difficult to see why any such inference is warranted, in view of the fact that most of these nations not only have little or no export surplus, but not many tourists spending money abroad, or large outgoing loans or other invisible credits of importance.

MOST readers of The New Republic are aware that, some months ago, a collection of the letters of Sacco and Vanzetti was published. They constitute a remarkable human document, which has been treated with respect and admiration by literary critics, and by the press in general, both in the United States and abroad. An exception must be noted, however, in the case of the Paris Herald a daily newspaper, published in English in Paris and owned by the New York Herald Tribune. In March of this year, the Paris Herald published a singularly mean-spirited editorial stating that the volume "purports to be" the letters of Sacco and Vanzetti, and adding, "how far these documents have been dressed up or perhaps even forged by persons interested in drawing from them either a moral or money profit, can only be surmised . . . . Sacco knew too little English to write even passably in that language. . . . The public is doubtless surprised to learn from the publishers' puffs that Vanzetti had a 'fever of knowledge,' read philosophy and especially psychology assiduously and wrote eloquently of his abstract beliefs," etc., etc. We do not know what purpose animated the Paris Herald in publishing this remarkable attack. It is perhaps not without significance that the editorial appeared when President Hoover was considering former Governor Fuller for Ambassador to France. In any case, the matter is not to be dropped. We are glad to report that the Viking Press, publisher of the Sacco-Vanzetti letters, has instituted suit on its own behalf and that of the editors, Gardner Jackson and Marion Denman Frankfurter, against the Paris Herald. The case ought to establish, once and for all, whether the letters are authentic.

DID you suppose that the dear old bogey of "the Bolshevist menace in the United States" was now too battered and decrepit to be trotted out even by the most shameless of our professional patriots? Not so; it has just been paraded again, under the auspices of Dr. Hubert Work, late chairman of the Republican National Committee, Senator James Watson of Indiana, and other Senators and Representatives, from Indiana and Ohio. All this on behalf of The National Republic, a monthly magazine published in Washington and devoted to saving the country from the Red Menace, whether or not the menace exists, or the country wants to be saved. A form letter signed by Representative Frank Murphy of Ohio has been sent out on stationery identical with that used by members of Congress, telling of "a nationwide educational and publicity work to combat destructive radical and un-American propaganda." The broad hint is made that this work is supplementary to that of Mr. Hoover: "The President is doing his part splen-

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didly. His friends in Congress and out will do all in their power to make his administration a success for the public good. It is one thing to give the country a good administration. It is quite as necessary to keep the public informed and sympathetic regarding its actual accomplishments so that it may have the adequate support of public opinion. Under the direct supervision of leaders here in Washington whose public records are in support of sound government, certain special publicity work is being conducted in ways that experience has proven to be most effective."

THIS sort of nonsense has been tried before and doubtless will be again. It meets with varying success, according to the state of the public mind, and need not be taken too seriously at any time. It is worth recalling, however, that The National Republic, then The National Republican, fought viciously and from first to last against the investigation of the oil and other scandals of the Harding regime. Mr. George B. Lockwood, then its editor, was one of those responsible for sending Blair Coan to Montana in an effort to "get something" on Senator Wheeler and blackmail him into ending his investigation of Harry Daugherty's administration of the Department of Justice. Characteristic of the paper's work is what it said of the Walsh and Wheeler committees in April, 1924:

> The ultimate aim of those back of this fight is to gain control of the machinery of government for their own sinister and selfish purposes. They reveal the inspiration for their damnable doctrine and the details of the campaign came from Russia. . . . The leaders in this campaign in the United States are hand in glove with the Bolshevist machine in Russia.

The National Republic, like the Bourbons, forgets nothing and learns nothing. Its present campaign is of importance only because of the strong imputation, which is given color by the endorsements of Mr. Work and Senator Watson, that it has the backing of President Hoover. He should instantly repudiate this suggestion. The National Republic and its friends are people with whom he cannot afford to have anything to do.

SOME important questions are raised by the case of Prof. Douglas C. MacIntosh of the Yale Divinity School, a Canadian who has just applied for and been denied American citizenship. Mme. Rosika Schwimmer, whose case was recently decided by the United States Supreme Court, was a pacifist whose application was rejected on that ground. But Professor MacIntosh is not a pacifist; he is willing to take up arms in a war which he considers just. He refuses, however, to bind himself in advance to fight in any or all American wars, and cites, as an example of one in which he would not participate, a war in violation of the Kellogg Pact. For this, Federal Judge Warren B. Burrows—the same who recently sat in the case of Mrs. Mary Ware Dennett—rejected his application. In the mind of Judge Burrows a good citizen is one who yields unhesitating obedience to the State. He is not entitled to make individual moral judgments, or, if he finds it impossible to keep from doing so, he must suppress those judgments and act in accordance with the general will. Twelve years ago this doctrine was denounced throughout America as "Prussianism"; we were supposed to have gone to war partly in order to help free the German people from its curse. Today, as both the Supreme Court decision in the Schwimmer case and the ruling of Judge Burrows indicate, what our rulers want is not free-minded members of democracy, but robots.

THE suppression of Scribner's Magazine, because of "objectionable" passages in Ernest Hemingway's new novel, "A Farewell to Arms," which the magazine is serializing, is a piece of stupid clowning which is sufficiently explained by saying that it took place in Boston. Boston censorship is a joke, to be sure; and Scribner's will scarcely suffer from having the high quality of its fiction thus widely proclaimed. But what sets our teeth on edge is the gumshoe method by which these suppressions are engineered in Boston, and then quietly blanketed upon the whole state. A complaint from the Watch and Ward Society or some other righteous group or individual, a telephone call from the chief of police to the wholesale distributors of magazines in Boston—and censorship is in effective operation all over Massachusetts. No legal charge need be brought; the whole thing is under-cover, extra-legal and vicious. When books are suppressed in Boston, booksellers in Brookline, Cambridge, and elsewhere in the state do not hesitate to carry them; but the magazine distributors take no risk in Massachusetts, once the telephone call from Chief Crowley has come in, and do not even give the individual newsdealer in other cities the opportunity to elect whether he will receive the usual allotment of the proscribed magazine. There is no point in blaming the distributors. The source of the trouble is, of course, the incredible Massachusetts censorship law. And the only way of combating the star-chamber proceedings which take place under it is for its victims to demand a legal show-down. The house of Scribner carries on a publishing tradition which goes back well into the days when the word liberty had a definite, and proud, connotation. We hope that Scribner's will get its back up and fight.

A NEW step in labor education will be taken with the opening, this fall, of the first winter school for women in industry—the Vineyard Shore School, at West Park on the Hudson. The school is an outgrowth of the summer-school movement which started at Bryn Mawr College in 1921, and aims to provide the means whereby women of the rank and file in industry can devote full time, for a school

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year, to courses of study planned especially for them, something the public schools and colleges have so far failed to provide. The subjects to be taught in the first year are English, Science, History and Economics. Experimental methods of teaching will be used; plans are also being developed for the future training of teachers for workers' classes. To be eligible for admission to the school, students must be between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five, must have had at least three years in industry and must be able to read and write English fairly well. The school does not aim to take workers out of industry or to help them to get better jobs. Instead, it aims definitely at sending workers back into industry filled with a desire to open educational doors to other workers.

THE MOST interesting thing about the rumpus over Bishop James Cannon Jr.'s dealings on margin with the brokerage house of Kable and Company is the phrase which the Bishop uses, quite innocently and un-self-consciously, to justify himself. "I have bought and sold stock . . . just as other business men do." Could a 60,000-word treatise on Religion in the United States, plus a four-volume biographical study of the Life and Ideals of James Cannon Jr. be more illuminating than are these six words by an influential Christian bishop about himself . . . *just as other business men do?*

# The Tariff and the Innocent Bystander

SENATOR BROOKHART'S statement that the enactment of higher tariff rates at this session of Congress will place the farmer at a further competitive disadvantage with the manufacturer expresses an opinion which is shared not only by many of his progressive colleagues but by economists who have given the subject study. He himself quotes figures from Professor Commons of the University of Wisconsin, and others, to show that the duties proposed on agricultural products will be so ineffective that they will appreciably benefit only a few small groups of farmers, and will raise their incomes by an aggregate of but about $13,000,000 a year over the $74,000,000 gain which the Fordney-McCumber rates brought them. This is trifling indeed compared with the subsidy of billions which farmers would receive from consumers if protection were effective on agricultural products, or compared with the increases in the price of manufactured articles which the new bill is likely to bring about. All this is an old story to readers of The New Republic, many of whom are probably wondering what the farmer will think of a "farm-relief" Congress which enacts legislation such that, as Senator Brookhart says, "For every dime he gains by reason of the tariff he will be penalized a dollar in living costs."

One tacit assumption of Senator Brookhart's, however, which is shared by almost all the other farm advocates who discuss the subject, we emphatically reject. It is that, whereas the farmer loses by the tariff, "industry"—including apparently all those who are not farmers—gains. The general acceptance of this assumption fatally weakens the farmer's case against the tariff, because it deprives him of allies. Everyone is theoretically sympathetic with the woes of agriculture, but, after all, those who are not actively engaged in raising crops are not likely to fume too hotly against an injustice by which they are told they profit. Yet, in this struggle between agriculture and favored groups of manufacturers, most of us are in fact innocent bystanders who may get hit. We shall suffer as much as the farmer from a victory of the protectionist manufacturer, and would have most to fear a tariff which was fully effective in both quarters.

What are the circumstances in which an import duty can be effective in protecting an industry or occupation against foreign competition—can raise its price above the level which would otherwise obtain? First, the industry must produce something which would be imported if there were no tariff. The writer of this editorial, for instance, needs no protection against the importation of competitive editorials from the London Times or The Pravda. In a precisely similar situation are the following numerous classes of persons (among others):

- Coal miners
- The building and engineering trades
- Railroad workers
- Steamship workers
- Bus, truck and trolley workers
- Electricity, gas and water workers
- Telephone and telegraph workers
- Workers in department stores, chain stores, mail-order houses—nearly all trade, retail and wholesale; workers in garages and gas stations and automobile salesmen
- Banking workers
- Teachers, doctors, lawyers, ministers, actors, artists—all professions
- Those engaged in personal service (not only house workers, but barbers, nurses, waiters, etc.)
- Employees of governments—national, state and local
- Bakers and other producers of, and dealers in, perishable food products
- Most clothing workers
- Printers of newspapers and periodicals
- Makers of heavy and bulky building materials, or building materials which must be hastily made to order

Most of these persons, in fact, Congress has never tried to "protect" by passing import duties on their products.

A second requirement for effective protection is that the industry to be guarded against foreign invasion must not produce a surplus above the domestic demand (at a profitable price) for its product, or, if it does, that it must have enough

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monopoly control of its market so that it can sell at a higher price at home than abroad. This immediately shuts out many manufacturing industries themselves—some of them prosperous and others ailing. It shuts out the greater part of the automobile industry—which is competitive and has a surplus for export, just as the farmers are and have. It excludes most woolen and cotton mills, which are competitive and over-equipped in relation to the domestic demand. The reason why the automobile industry is prosperous while the farmers and mills are not has little to do with the tariff. It arises chiefly from a combination of two facts: first, that the costs of automobile production in this country are lower than the foreign costs, and second, that the demand for automobiles has, so far, been indefinitely expansible as production grew. No doubt many other American manufacturing industries have no need of a tariff because of their low costs, or could not profit by it if they had an increase in duties, because of competition and excess production.

Where, then, do we stand? Making our estimates in round numbers and basing them roughly on the census of 1920, the following gainfully employed persons cannot be benefited, as producers, by the tariff:

| | |
|---|---|
| Farmers, miners and fishermen | 10,000,000 |
| Transportation, communication and trade workers | 7,000,000 |
| Professions, personal service, etc. | 8,000,000 |
| Building and construction | 4,000,000 |
| Manufacturing (at least) | 5,000,000 |
| | 34,000,000 |

And those who can receive some benefit include perhaps the remainder of the 42,000,000 gainfully employed, as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Farmers, miners, etc. | 2,210,000 |
| Factory and hand workers | 5,150,000 |
| Trade | 480,000 |
| Miscellaneous | 160,000 |
| | 8,000,000 |

These figures are admittedly very rough, and could be much improved by more detailed studies—but they sketch the broad picture. Why should the 34,000,000 increase by legislation the prices they have to pay for the products of the 8,000,000? Where is the national advantage in such a scheme? Much better to take the money, if we have it to spare, and spend it where it will really do the most good—in increasing national efficiency, in housing, in improving the status of really depressed industries such as coal and wheat-farming, which the tariff cannot help. It is well to remember that the tariff is not a device which benefits everyone except a few down-trodden minorities—it actually injures the vast majority.

# With Unclean Hands

THE decision of the United States Supreme Court in the jury-shadowing case, arising from the conspiracy charge against Harry Sinclair, on which we commented in our issue of June 12, had other interesting aspects than the one through which the convictions of Sinclair, Henry Mason Day and W. Sherman Burns of the Burns Detective Agency were confirmed. The chief argument of the defense was that, in shadowing the jury, investigating their financial and domestic difficulties, their relations with their neighbors and the community, etc., and in concentrating espionage upon three "whose history did not indicate strength of character," they were merely following the well established practice of the Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice, and believed themselves as citizens entitled to take measures for their protection to counteract tactics which they had every reason to believe were being used against them by the government.

Defendant W. J. Burns, who had himself been at the head of the Bureau of Investigation and may be supposed to know, testified that, if his advice had been sought by his agency (of course it wasn't!), "he would unhesitatingly have advised that such employment was a lawful and proper practice frequently followed by the Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice." W. Sherman Burns averred that he had been advised by counsel that there is no warrant in law for reserving *exclusively to the government* the right to exercise surveillance of a jury. The defendants in their original trial offered to produce "many witnesses from all parts of the United States, for the purpose of showing that, for a long time, United States attorneys throughout the Union, under direction of the Department of Justice, by agents of the Department as distinguished from local marshals, had indulged in the custom of shadowing jurors, also to show indulgence in such practices on different occasions." This evidence was excluded by the trial judge, and his refusal was sustained by the Supreme Court in this realistic sentence: "The Department is not a lawmaker and mistakes *or violations of law by it* [italics ours] give no license for wrongful conduct by others."

In general, it is felt that the decision of the Supreme Court was a wholesome one, and that even the nominal punishment of Sinclair, Day, and the younger Burns will have valuable deterrent effect in the future on litigants who meddle with juries. In a long view, however, it may be doubted whether it would not have been more to public interest if the evidence of espionage of juries by the government had been admitted, even if, under cover of its presentation, the defendants had gone scot-free. At the time when the general violation of law is under discussion, it would have been useful to have the part which the government has played in such violation held up to public scrutiny. In this con-

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nection, the dismissal of the case against the elder Burns must be regarded as most unfortunate. No sane man (except, of course, justices of the Supreme Court!) can believe that he was not aware of what his agency was doing, but his former connection with the Department of Justice undoubtedly made his conviction an unedifying spectacle—by which we mean, as usual, one tending too much to edification. That governments, national, state, local, in this country have been guilty of violations of law, particularly in the administration of justice, is common knowledge. The conviction of Mooney was brought about by subornation of perjury. The conviction of the I. W. W.'s at Centralia was procured by intimidation of the jury, according to their own statement. When Mr. Harlan Stone assumed office as Attorney-General, he promised that dubious methods in the Department of Justice should cease, a promise which has not been kept by his successors, as the operations of Mrs. Willebrandt, while she was in office, testify.

The degradation of government under the strain of the enforcement of the prohibition laws is evident in the persistent use, by its agents, of the methods of *agents provocateurs* to secure evidence; and in the violence practised by such agents in carrying on a war which, in spite of Mr. Hoover's recent statement, has been undistinguishable, in practice, from the vendettas of gangs of bootleggers' gunmen.

We may be sure that the recently appointed Commission on the Enforcement of Law will not lose sight of the part which government itself plays in betraying the law. Mr. Wickersham has his experience as head of the Department of Justice to draw upon. Dean Roscoe Pound was one of the twelve lawyers to sign the attack upon one of Mr. Wickersham's successors, the Honorable A. Mitchell Palmer, for his conduct in the great office of Attorney-General. Apparently, Mr. W. J. Burns is more than willing to give his testimony on what we feel is the most insidious and dangerous form of crime—that practised by those charged with the administration of justice. We can only hope that the Commission will speak freely of what we know and what they learn.

# The Clergy Return to Mexico

THE outstanding revelation in the termination of the three-year conflict between the Mexican government and the Roman Catholic Church is that the rift need never have occurred. With all the "rejoicing" over the settlement, the fact emerges that the Mexican hierarchy has accepted the governmental conditions which three years ago it declared intolerable.

The recent impasse, which may well be considered as merely an episode in the more than century-old struggle between Church and State in Mexico, arose early in 1926 when the hierarchy denounced the Constitution of 1917 and its restrictions on the Church. Some of these—the prohibition to own property, to conduct primary schools, etc.—date back to the Constitution of 1857. But these restrictions, arising as a result of the clergy's opposition to milder reforms and its launching of a bloody three years' "War of the Reform" (1856-1859), were for nearly sixty years not enforced. Although the laws remained on the books, Porfirio Diaz worked hand in glove with the Church. The Mexican Revolution, begun in 1910, took a violent anti-clerical turn, however, only after clerical hostility to Madero and support of Victoriano Huerta became pronounced. The Constitution of 1917 reaffirmed and increased the restrictions upon the clergy. Legally, in Mexico today churches are the property of the nation; the Church may not be a corporate entity and may hold no property; it may not conduct primary schools or give religious instruction in them; no religious processions are permitted; and all religious ceremonies must be conducted within the regular places of worship. Monastic orders are forbidden. Religious publications must not discuss politics; priests may not vote or hold public office; the number of clergy in a given state may be fixed by that state's legislature.

These restrictions, some of which seem oppressive to a people reared, as are citizens of the United States, in a tradition of freedom of worship, are understandable after a study of the persistent abuse of power of the Mexican Roman Catholic Church, its former economic and political as well as spiritual dominance over the nation, its continuous interference in affairs of state, its steady support of the feudal system of land tenure which Juarez, three-quarters of a century ago, attempted vainly to disintegrate, but which the present Revolution has in large measure dissolved. In Mexico the Church has been hostile to agrarian reform, has bitterly fought public-school education, as well as labor-unionism—and has been ultra-montane beyond any entity of the universal Church elsewhere.

Even after the adoption of the Constitution of 1917, many of its provisions (including the anti-clerical) were in many instances not enacted into law. The renewed opposition of the hierarchy to this legislation in January, 1926, and the continued stubborn resistance to the government's reform program, prompted the Calles administration to pass enabling legislation to enforce first the constitutional provision against clergy of foreign birth officiating in Mexico, a provision denounced by one of the Mexican bishops as heretical. The law as enacted required that on and after August 1 of that year, the clergy would be obliged to register, as members of other professions in Mexico are required to do. It was this registration that the bishops declared to be intolerable and "violative of natural and divine law," and caused them to order their priests to refuse compliance. These, therefore, in obedience to superior orders, withdrew from the churches. Mexico has been without officiating priests for nearly three years.

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Immediately following, a Catholic lay organization, created with the sanction and endorsement of the hierarchy, declared a nation-wide economic boycott. Various revolutionary movements burst into flame with the declared objective of overthrowing the government. These have continued to date, the *"Cristeros"* having been particularly active in the states of Jalisco and Colima. Their activities never constituted a serious threat against the stability of the Calles administration, but were a constant annoyance and brought no small hardship upon many of the faithful, including civilians whose sympathy and support for these subversive movements were sternly punished by the government. Violence bred violence. Innocent and guilty often suffered alike. The real blame for the bloodshed, however, rests squarely upon the hierarchy, which, while publicly denying complicity in the rebellion, tacitly gave it every encouragement. A threat of excommunication against those resorting to violence in behalf of the Church would have ended the insurrection at any time. The government had no choice but to proceed ruthlessly against it.

It was after a particularly bloody assault on a train in April, 1927, in which several score of passengers, including women and children, were killed by rebels carrying the banner of *"Viva Cristo Rey!"*, directed, the government charged, by three priests, that Calles ordered the deportation of the archbishops and bishops. Most of them left, although several remained in Mexico in hiding.

Since then, spokesmen for the Church have continued to maintain that the situation was impossible of solution, given the restrictive character of the Mexican legislation, unless this were rescinded; while the government maintained that the clergy could at any time return if and when it was prepared to obey the nation's laws.

For over a year, informal parleys have been in process. A suggestion, made through intermediaries, that each bishop be allowed to register the priests of his diocese, instead of having these register singly with the government was immediately assented to by the Calles administration as immaterial to it, provided the registration were accomplished. But upon the Church's demanding as indispensable the right to give primary instruction in the schools, the government terminated the negotiations. Reconciliation was further made impossible for the time being by the assassination of Obregon by a religious fanatic and the implication therein of the Mother Superior of a convent, followed by the widespread demonstrations and acts of violence when the murderer, found guilty after a long trial, was executed.

The renewed intimations by the hierarchy that it would like to return were, however, met receptively by President Portes Gil, and through the mediation of various persons, some of whose names have appeared in the daily press, peace has been reëstablished. Under its terms, which are informal and without a signed agreement, the clergy submits to the formerly "intolerable" registration, although this is to be done, as the Mexican government has long been willing to have it done, through the bishops.

This is the sum and substance of the "reconciliation," and that is all of it. The statement in the prepared announcement that "religious instruction while not permitted in the schools will be permitted in the churches" is merely an affirmation of a condition which existed prior to August 1, 1926. Such instruction has always been available to parishioners who desired it for their children. The third statement in the presidential announcement that "the right is reserved to Mexican Catholic prelates to apply for modification of the Constitution at any time in the future which is the same granted all Mexican citizens" is another affirmation of a condition which has always existed.

Thus, the Mexican hierarchy could easily have avoided three bloody years in which the Church lost much ground and prestige, and the Mexican people—with the exception of the few wealthy who could afford "bootleg" masses—were without "benefit of clergy," and not a few fought and perished in the delusion that they were martyrs to a "holy cause." The hierarchy has now come to terms in the face of its inability to secure any true popular and effective support of the Mexican people, and of the manifest fact that the government could not be starved or beaten into submission.

That the clerical problem is "settled" in Mexico, few students of Mexican history will venture to assert. One need but compare the conditions which the Church demands and accepts—as in Italy—where it is in a position to compel acceptance of its desires, to gauge how antipodal is its status in Mexico today. To improve that status, the hierarchy must turn over a new leaf and coöperate with, instead of opposing, the reformative and reconstructive program which is so obviously Mexico's present need. That is the hierarchy's opportunity to restore the Church in Mexico and to achieve its spiritual mission. Adherence to its previous ways will merely prolong its four centuries of failure.

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# The Vertical City

AMERICANS who read of book censorships in Boston, dry raids in Michigan, Catholic-baiting in Georgia and political imprisonments in California and begin to wonder if this really is a free country may derive some profit by examining certain aspects of the New York building situation. There are certain acts tending to produce congestion which you may not perform on the island of Manhattan. In specified hours and on specified streets of the theater district you may not make turns in an automobile, either right or left. You may not make a public speech or hold a parade in a public street without police permission. You may not park a load of hay on Forty-second Street or Madison Avenue opposite the Grand Central Station. You may not even stand still if a policeman asks you to please move on. But you may cause all the congestion you like by erecting buildings tall enough, bulky enough and numerous enough to attract more people to a given street than that street can decently hold. You may create more havoc than a hundred hay wagons. You may add the equivalent of twenty parades to the street's hourly business. That is your privilege as a free-born American citizen.

It is a privilege of which New York real-estate men are gratefully availing themselves. One may count in the Grand Central district at least a dozen buildings, under way or of recent construction, which fairly merit the name of skyscrapers. Two rise, or are to rise, above sixty stories, two others above fifty. Less spectacular structures add to the mass of humanity which is increasingly attracted to this neighborhood. The streets, meanwhile, remain the same width and are likely to remain so. The situation is comparable with that which would exist if the Mississippi River, instead of being subject to periodic high water and to occasional disastrous floods, were each year forced to carry a larger drainage. Sooner or later it would be in perpetual flood.

Let us consider specifically what new construction in the Grand Central zone has meant and will mean in the way of congestion. Eight buildings, with a total floor space of more than 3,000,000 square feet, have been opened, or will be, for occupancy this year. Four more, with a total of about 2,800,000 square feet, will be opened during 1930. Four of these twelve buildings—the New York Central, the Chanin, the Lefcourt National and Ten East Fortieth Street—will house a total of 17,000 tenants. The whole group, it is estimated, will give office room for 46,000 workers. If we add the buildings opened during 1927, the total rises to more than 60,000 workers, nearly all of whom are actual additions to the daytime population of the zone. The Forty-second Street Property Owners' and Merchants' Association recently estimated that the zone's inhabitants during daylight hours had grown by 8,000 between February 1 and the last of May of the present year.

During 1928 more than 44,000,000 subway tickets were sold at the Grand Central Station. This represents three hundred daily one-way rides for about 145,000 individuals. We therefore arrive at the conclusion that, if all the inmates of the new buildings used the subway and if none of them had used it before, they would at once increase by nearly one-third the burden now added to the system at the Grand Central Station. If they took suburban trains, they would add a corresponding weight to existing railroad traffic. Many of them, perhaps, moved to the new locations from older buildings on Manhattan and thus do not represent a real increase in subway or suburban transit. But this slack is bound to be taken up. The new structures represent increased opportunities for doing business on Manhattan and in a specific district, and these opportunities are sure to be used to the full, provided access can be had to them. The question we must face is, Under what conditions is this access to be had? The subway systems and the suburban rapid-transit lines have already nearly reached the saturation point. Trains cannot be put through the subway stations faster than at present. Additions to platforms, and corresponding additions to trains, are but a palliative. We are likely very soon to face a situation which will strain every resource of the transportation systems to meet even "normal" conditions, and interruptions in service will more and more take on the aspect of veritable catastrophes. Already the police have to be called in, if trains are interrupted for as long as ten minutes. What of a breakdown of an hour or more? What sinister possibilities do we face if a panic breaks out? These are the dramatic aspects of congestion. But though the evil may rise to the proportions of a major crisis at any moment, it is always in the nature of a chronic illness, weakening the vital processes of the whole city.

Since a street system cannot overflow its banks, the effect of pouring an increased volume into it is to lessen the rate of flow. The congested masses back up into outlying streets, jam subways and elevated lines and produce a human tide pool where delay, discomfort and even danger are continually present. The reason for a city's existence is that it enables people, through association and organization, to get certain things done more easily than they could be done if the population were scattered. But congestion means that the city, or a section of

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it, has passed the point of increasing returns. Anything which adds to congestion makes the city of less use to almost everyone living or working in it. A group of tall buildings in a crowded center may cause as much actual loss, though not as much visible loss, as a fire or an earthquake.

The argument has been made that great office buildings may diminish street uses by providing within themselves facilities for which the tenants of less well equipped structures would have to go outside. In the group of buildings surrounding the Grand Central Station, for instance, an individual might comfortably and even usefully live out his entire life without once venturing outdoors. But this happens not to be the way in which human life is carried on, nor, so far as we can tell, is it likely to be. Man is an animal with a desire to move about. He has prodigiously developed the means of doing so. There is every indication that, no matter how much local traffic may be held in check by the process of erecting great structures which are really good-sized towns, the regular movements of great masses of humanity in and out of the central areas every day will continue. For one individual a skyscraper may keep off the street, it will add, let us say, three or four. A skyscraper is not independent. It cannot grow food or produce raw materials. If it is used in whole or part for manufacturing or selling, its goods must be hauled in and out. Even though it is an office building, it eats up a considerable amount of coal and other necessities which must be trucked through the streets.

Let us return for a moment to the problem of carrying the workers in the building to and from their jobs. One of New York City's most congested areas is that at the lower tip of Manhattan. Here, as Mr. Daniel L. Turner once pointed out, there is a district of about 245 acres, or one-third of a square mile. Of this, about 118 acres consists of building sites. When Mr. Turner made his estimate, four acres, or about 3 percent of the total, were covered with buildings twenty-four stories or more in height. The average height of buildings in the area was 7.8 stories. Perhaps the proportions have increased slightly since then, but for our present purposes they may stand. Even at an average of 7.8 stories, twenty rapid-transit stations were required to carry the crowds in and out. Yet, as Mr. Turner figured, if every landowner built to the height permitted by existing laws, thirty more stations would be required.

A single structure may easily house 15,000 workers. "The capacity of a rapid-transit train of ten cars packed full," said Mr. Turner, "is 1,500 passengers. It would require ten such trains to move the occupants of the building, morning and night. At the rate of thirty trains per hour per track this means that the entire capacity of a two-track subway for twenty minutes in one direction would be needed, or the entire capacity of a four-track subway for ten minutes." Obviously, no matter how eagerly the city undertakes the building of subways, no such transit facilities can be provided for every spot of ground in Manhattan, or even for every spot now highly developed. If we look at an air photograph of the island we see at once that skyscrapers occur in clumps and streaks. Closely adjoining these clumps and streaks there is often land which has actually deteriorated in value. A skyscraper development soaks up values as it attracts humanity. Architecturally beautiful though it may well be, it is too often economically a kind of wart. Yet there is nothing to prevent any landowner in Manhattan from building a sixty-story structure on his land, provided the base is large enough to enable him to comply with the provisions of the set-back ordinance.

No one, no matter how vivid his imagination, predicts any such result in the calculable future. Even the least social-minded of real-estate agents would admit that there is a point at which the building of skyscrapers—or at least the increase of building bulks—on Manhattan will have to stop. But there are many who do admit this but who would think it rankly unjust if the city government, with an ultimate saturation point in view, took steps to determine how building bulks should be distributed and how much bulk should be allowed within a given area. So far the city officials have bowed to this prejudice. For a quarter of a century they have been building subways or subsidizing them. For a quarter of a century the passenger traffic created by new structures in congested areas has grown more rapidly than the subways could carry it away, and street traffic has increased out of all proportion to the capacity of the streets.

It would not be fair to say that New York City has done nothing to remedy this state of affairs. A City Improvement Commission, appointed by Mayor McClellan in 1903, reported, in 1907, in favor, among other things, of widening and extending streets and highways. In 1914 a Committee on the City Plan, with a list of distinguished names "met in a beautiful room in the City Hall once or twice"—the phrase is that of the late Charles D. Norton—but got no further. A Heights of Buildings Commission, of which Mr. Edward M. Bassett was chairman, drew up the Zoning Resolution of 1913, which has given us our distinctive style of set-back architecture. Finally there was Mayor Walker's Committee on Plan and Survey. This committee, appointed in 1926, coöperated to a certain extent with the privately financed Committee on Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs, which has just made public its major proposals. But though the Regional Plan Committee has taken a definite stand with regard to skyscrapers, the city has not. The reasons are simple. The question is one which involves large private interests. To touch it is to invite instant controversy.

Part of the opposition to any regulation of building bulks on a large scale will be purely selfish. Real-estate values in New York City are calculated

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a long time in advance. Any move which disappoints what promoters regard as reasonable expectations of profit will naturally be resisted. The fact that there is bound to be a collapse of values in certain sections if present conditions of congestion are allowed to continue and grow worse is overlooked. It is not generally remembered that in the growth of the city there have been repeated deflations, as shopping centers and exclusive residential sections have developed, decayed and been supplanted by others. Nor is it yet recognized that these episodes have been largely due to bad planning. The inhabitants of Manhattan have met their repeated congestion crises by moving into comparatively undeveloped territory. But the island has now reached a point where this escape is no longer possible. The transportation systems which were to have provided a way out have become in a sense fetters. Created to enable people to reach certain spots, they have caused those spots to be over-built. Constructed to scatter the population, they have also, at least during the working day, brought it to a focus. Incidentally, they have presented owners of land at strategic intersections with a large increase in values and held out to them the hope of more to come. Human nature can hardly be expected to relinquish this hope without a struggle.

There is, moreover, another motive to be considered. One of the intangible satisfactions which a New Yorker receives as a reward for living in a most uncomfortable city arises from the monumental character of his artificial scenery. Skyscrapers are undoubtedly popular with the man in the street. He watches them with tender, if somewhat fearsome, interest from the moment the hole is dug until the last Gothic waterspout is put in place. Perhaps the nearest a New Yorker ever comes to civic pride is when he contemplates the sky line and realizes that there is and has been nothing to match it in the world. This feeling the present writer believes is real, though it would be hard to produce documentary evidence of it. We do have a love for bigness. We are thrilled by a sixty-three-story building, and would be even more thrilled by one that ran up to one hundred stories. We derive a vicarious sense of power from our cubes and prisms.

If we were to propose that no more skyscrapers should be built, this combined opposition of self-interest and grandiosity would probably be too strong to resist. We should be trying to sweep back the ocean with a broom. But no one is suggesting that skyscrapers be abolished. No one even suggests that their numbers, their height or their cubic contents be diminished beyond the limits set by the laws of physics. What is proposed is that some attention be paid to those laws. It is, for example, necessary to remember that not more than one solid body, and specifically not more than one human being, can occupy the same space at the same time—the evidence to be seen in any subway car at the rush hour to the contrary notwithstanding. Th question is not how many skyscrapers New Yor City or Manhattan Island is to have, but wher the number that can be had—that is, to which ac cess can be provided without costing more than i is worth—are to be placed.

There is, of course, some leeway, for the amoun of discomfort that human beings can be forced t endure is a variable quantity. It is conceivable tha congestion in streets and on rapid-transit lines migh be worse than it is and still be endured. But in large way the problem is mathematical. Subwa building cannot continue forever, for it is not pos sible to dig more than a certain number of hole underneath an area of fixed dimensions. And eve though all important streets are double-decked o triple-decked—which God forbid—there is also limit in that direction.

The public, through its elected authorities, ha assumed responsibility for providing means of ac cess to buildings through streets and transportatio systems, either directly or through contracts o franchises granted to private or semi-private cor porations. It seems inevitable that it must ulti mately assume responsibility also for the kind o building that is to occupy a given area. Otherwis it is controlling not the most essential but the leas essential element in the situation. It is of little us to provide subway equipment that will carry thre thousand people out of a given station every tw minutes, or street facilities that will carry sixtee hundred vehicles in an hour past a given intersec tion, and exercise no jurisdiction over the numbe of people who will be allowed to carry on thei daily affairs within the area served by the give station or adjacent to the given intersectio Streets, rapid-transit facilities and buildings are in terdependent members of the same formula. Eac is affected by what happens to either of the other

The actual control of building bulks is not, o course, an easy or simple matter. The amount o traffic which a building will produce depends no only on its size but on its uses. A department stor will create more congestion than an office buildin several times its magnitude. A theater is no prol lem at all in the morning, but, as Mr. Whalen ha found, very much of a problem at night. But thes things can be worked out. They are at the wors not one-tenth as complicated as the calculations tha go into the erection of a steel-frame building. The may be made on somewhat the same basis, fo architects and engineers now determine to the la ounce the load which a structure will have to carr and our problem differs chiefly in that we are thinl ing of horizontal pressure rather than of vertica pressure.

The first principle to lay down is that a sk scraper demands space in proportion to its heigh Perhaps it would be possible to work out a rati between the space it should have and the shado which it casts. More practically, there should b

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a ratio between the buildings, on the one hand, and the capacity of streets and rapid-transit lines on the other. The skyscraper of the future, if we plan wisely, will be a lone giant, higher, perhaps, than any we now possess, but sufficiently separated from its fellows to keep the *average height* of buildings in its area down to a reasonable level. For it is, after all, average heights that matter. If all Manhattan were built uniformly to a height of eight stories, we should have just as hideous a congestion as though we had a forest of skyscrapers looming above four-story neighboring roofs.

We cannot, without spending more than it is worth, send our city more than a certain average distance into the air, either in New York or in Chicago, or in any other metropolis. Manhattan is an object lesson, not because it is a part of the greatest city, but because there the tendency of concentration has been carried very nearly to the point of absurdity. It has been carried, indeed, to a point where de-civilization may be said to have set in. And this is a point at which the right of the individual to do what he will with his own should cease.

R. L. DUFFUS.

# The Literary Business

NOW that new men and new methods have entered the publishing world, the old-fashioned publisher is becoming even rarer than the old-fashioned whiskey cocktail. One remembers him with a certain regret; he retained the sort of distinction that smelt of Havanas, old leather, and the past. In a cubbyhole of an office, in the midst of books upholstered in dull reds and olive green like Pullman cars—and often more conducive to sleep—he used to receive his favorite authors. "Mr. Slingsby," he would say, "we should very much like to offer you a higher royalty for your second novel, but after all you must remember that we publishers are business men."

The old-fashioned publisher was mistaken. He was something of a barrister and something of a pedagogue; at times he acted as a physician charged with preserving the moral hygiene of the public, and at times he felt himself to be an artist; but his strictly business talents were limited. About him the world was changing: mail-order houses were replacing the cross-roads store; chain groceries had blossomed at the corner of every street; mass production and mass consumption were developing side by side; but the old-fashioned publisher still clung to the methods of the past.

The new publishers also refer to themselves as business men, but they are speaking exactly. They are familiar with all the schemes that have brought prosperity to a hundred American industries, and are trying to adapt them to their own problems. Under the direction of these men, the profession of publishing is becoming the literary business. And this being the case, I shall discuss a few of its present tendencies in purely business terms. I shall also try to describe the economic conditions that produced the book clubs.

## II

Some of the newer firms are inclined to regard publishing as one of the luxury trades. They seek their customers in the "milady" class, among the people that like "exclusive" products, French soaps, modern furniture, Viennese chocolates, and also among people not quite sophisticated enough to protest against being called sophisticated. To please this type of buyers, who may or may not be readers, they sometimes transform their books into *bibelots,* into bright packages like candy-boxes or cartons of perfumed soap. They publish testimonials from society women. They specialize in limited editions, numbered and autographed. And they follow the business policy of the luxury trades, which depend on high prices to compensate for a lower volume of sales.

Other publishers have borrowed the methods of the show business. They hire press-agents who have served an apprenticeship on Broadway. They often speak of "circussing" their authors. The term should be defined. To "circus" a writer means to hold teas, dinners, and dances in his honor —sometimes with prohibition raids by special request—to have him interviewed on Einstein and birth control, to send him on exploring expeditions in New England and lecture tours through Patagonia, to reveal the secret places of his heart—in short, to assure him a place in the mythology of metropolitan newspapers. This divine status is not without its dangers. Reporters are a skeptical race, successful writers are fair game, and investigations may show, for example, that a young woman supposed to be a nurseling of Neptune, an ungrizzled tar, is really the graduate of a California high school who had once taken a voyage with her mother.

Most publishers, however, avoid the sensational methods of the circus and the stage. Some, with successful advertising agents as their counselors, employ the various "appeals" that have vanquished sales resistance for a thousand trade-marked products—the appeal to pride, to fear, to sexual vanity, to the acquisitive instinct, to the desire for self-improvement. . . . Others use what every large business firm knows as "institutional advertising," the purpose of which is not to sell a specific article, but to give prestige to the firm name. The public is

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taught that any motor by Packard, Chrysler, or Buick is a dependable motor. Similarly, any book published, let us say, by Scriblin's, will be a reliable book that can safely be recommended to readers of every age. Unfortunately, art is uncertain; it wilts away on fertile ground and blossoms unexpectedly among the rocks; only the mediocre in literature is thoroughly dependable.

These new tendencies in publishing are neither wholly admirable nor entirely successful. But they have a certain redeeming vitality. Thanks partly to them, publishing is no longer a corpse floating in the backwaters of American business. It has become part of the main current; it is treated with respect; its scandals are discussed on the front page. Its principal difficulty, however, is still to be solved. This difficulty is lack of efficiency—as revealed, first, in the number of printed books that never find a buyer, and, secondly, in the high price of those that do.

## III

Books are too expensive. Their cost to the public is hardly justified by their production cost. The margin of theoretical profit seems excessive. And yet the actual profit, whether to the bookseller or to the publisher, is usually very limited.

Let us take the case of a novel priced at $2.50. The cost of manufacture—of paper, printing and binding—depends on several factors, not the least of which is the number of copies printed. However, if the edition is fairly large, we might fix upon $.35, or 14 percent, as a somewhat arbitrary figure. The author's royalty also varies, but it rarely exceeds 15 percent. Finally, there is the publisher's overhead to be considered; it is not easy to determine, but neither is it very large, and perhaps $.17½, or 7 percent, would be fairly near the truth. Adding these figures together, we arrive at $.90 as the total production cost. The remaining sum of $1.60, or 64 percent of the retail price, is partly sales cost and partly profit.[1]

Apparently the profits of booksellers and publishers should be enormous. And it is true that they are great, but only in the case of books that have a wide sale. For they are largely consumed in the publication of good and bad books—chiefly the latter—that have no sale whatever.

This is the explanation of the high prices that prevail in the literary business. When we buy a novel for $2.50, we are paying perhaps a dollar as an indemnity to publishers and booksellers for not buying their other novels. We are paying for the twenty-five copies of a travel book that are standing unsold on the shelves of the bookstore. We are paying the publisher for ten thousand copies of a widely advertised biography that are now gathering dust in his warehouse, before being "remaindered" for thirty cents apiece. We are paying for the ineffectiveness of his advertising. We are paying a bounty for the publication of the good books that nobody buys, the immature novels that nobody buys, and the failures of authors who are trying vainly to repeat themselves. We are paying an excessive price for our novel because the literary business, like the show business, is largely a game of chance.

It is a game in which the odds today are rather on the side of the player. Twelve years ago, when the old-fashioned publishers still predominated, I am told that the odds were nearly even. A book was quite as apt to show a loss as a profit, and several of the larger firms were on the edge of insolvency. The situation has changed since then; even the "average novel"—if such a thing exists—is a mildly profitable venture, and consequently publishers have discovered that they can double their profits merely by issuing twice as many volumes. And so the number of dull books, of useless books, of books that are a drain on the business as a whole, has dangerously increased.

## IV

This was the situation that led to the development of the book clubs. For the book clubs are an attempt to introduce mass consumption into publishing, thus eliminating most of the risks and part of the expense. Obviously, if a hundred thousand people agree in advance to buy a certain book, the cost of distributing it will no longer be 64 percent. Obviously the distributing organization will be left with a handsome profit, which in turn it may share with its customers—either in the form of additional service, or else in the more practical form of lower prices.

There is a real price war today among the leagues, clubs, guilds, and societies for distributing books. One of them sets its price per volume at $1.67, on the basis of a three-month trial subscription. Another has offered twelve current books in paper and twelve classics bound in cloth at an average for the whole of $.62½ each. And the latest club to be announced has the lowest price of all; it gives twelve paper-backed volumes for $5, or a little less than $.42 apiece. Premiums may soon be offered. The oldest of the clubs, however, is adhering to its original policy of selling books at their retail price; additional service and a distinguished board of editors are its principal inducements; whether these are strong enough in themselves to withstand the new competition remains to be seen.

Meanwhile, the general institution of book clubs has been vigorously attacked. We are told that they try to lead the public by the nose, that their claims are false because there is no real book of the month, that the editors of the clubs are usurping the functions of critics in general, that authors suf-

[1] These figures are merely approximate, and certainly they will be disputed. However, they are confirmed independently by two facts: (1) A large publishing house gives its employees a discount of 60 percent on the books they purchase for their own use. (2) The Book of the Month Club demands and receives a discount of 70 percent on the books it chooses for monthly distribution. In this case, however, the author forgoes part of his royalties.

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fer by losing part of their royalties, that publishers suffer by being forced to grant an excessive discount, that booksellers suffer most of all. . . . There is truth, moreover, in many of these statements; but it seems to me that the whole argument is academic.

Some of the book clubs have already proved successful; others will be successful in the future; still others will fail, but the institution as a whole is part of contemporary civilization. It is mail-order and chain-store merchandising applied to the literary business. It is another step in the gradual "socialization" of the country, in the process of reducing every citizen to a unit of sales resistance. Its effects are partly harmful, but the institution itself seems permanent. One might just as well consider the abolition of Woolworth, Sears-Roebuck, the United Cigar Stores, or the dummy policeman at the corner.

Moreover, once we have bowed to necessity, we may even find that the book clubs have certain compensations not listed in their advertising matter among the Five Exceptional Benefits. With their claims and counter-claims, their full-page spreads, their ten million—by actual count—booklets, their photographed Boards of Editors, their hesitations between good literature that is dull and bad books that are exciting . . . they have added vastly to the interest of the literary business. And they have given literature itself a sort of dignity that it lacked, I fear, in the days of Chatterton and Keats. Authors may still starve on occasion, but they starve in the midst of plenty. They need no longer hide their profession from disapproving relatives in Pittsburgh or Kansas City. They have nothing to be ashamed of at present—for, are they not contributing in their own small way to what the book clubs are rapidly transforming into the Nation's Seventh Industry?

Let us remember, moreover, that chain stores have not abolished the corner grocery. Mail-order houses, although they deal directly with the manufacturer, have not destroyed the independent jobber. Booksellers and publishers are in no danger of extinction; they may even find that their business is increasing, but probably they will be forced to revise their methods still further to meet the new competition. They may, for example, cease to gamble on the sort of books that "really aren't so bad, and the author may do better next time." They may prune the dead wood from their list of titles, and confine themselves to the books that are really worth publishing. And possibly, after they have done away with their useless risks—possibly they may even decide to reduce the price of books.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

# Public Ownership in North Dakota

THE once famous Nonpartisan League and its "Industrial Program," consisting of state-ownership projects, has long since been dead in the minds of the people of this country, thanks chiefly to the silence of the press. It is not known even by progressives that Senator Frazier was reëlected last November as the candidate of the Nonpartisan League in North Dakota, let alone that the state-owned industries are proving successful.

The political organization known as the Nonpartisan League is still a power in North Dakota. It boasts two United States Senators, one Congressman, and five of the elected state officials. Its opponents who have been elected to office have espoused the "Industrial Program," but have opposed the leadership of the Nonpartisan League, and gained office by claiming that they could manage and operate the state industries better than the Nonpartisans themselves.

Most of the state industries which were begun by the state back in 1919, when the Nonpartisan League was in full control of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the state government, are still in existence, and have proved very successful. A few have fallen by the wayside, due mostly to the incompetency of the officials in charge of them, and not to any inherent defect in governmental administration.

The three outstanding successes, which have remained under full Nonpartisan League management and control since 1919, are the State Bonding Fund, the State Fire and Tornado Fund, and the State Hail Insurance Fund. These industries have been under the sole management and control of S. A. Olsness, a thorough believer in and advocate of state ownership, and a staunch Nonpartisan Leaguer.

The insurance companies dragged these industries through the state courts, and before the Supreme Court of the United States, thus preventing them from operating for several years after their creation. But, in spite of the opposition of the insurance companies and their agents, and the long court battles, these industries have continued to grow, until today they have piled up such surpluses that they cannot be overthrown. A bitter assault has been planned and financed by the insurance companies during the last legislative session to break down these laws, and to prevent the further encroachment of state insurance upon private insurance activities.

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The State Bonding Fund was organized by law in 1915, but declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States two years later; a new law, drafted and passed in 1919, overcame the legal objections. The new law provided that all state, county, township, city, and school treasurers and other officials must be bonded with the State Bonding Fund. The same premiums were charged as have been charged by the insurance companies. The overhead costs for the state were barely 3 percent, instead of 45 percent to 75 percent as in the private companies, with the result that a fund of $250,000 has been accumulated in its treasury. In two more years this sum will have grown until it will be unnecessary to charge one cent for premiums, all losses and operating expenses being provided by the interest on the fund.

An even greater success in state ownership has been in the Fire and Tornado Fund. Starting without a penny of capital, as did the Bonding Fund, and charging the same rate of premium as old-line companies, this department has built up a fund of almost a million dollars. The manager states that within two more years this fund will also have reached such a sum, built up entirely from the profits, that it will not be necessary for the political subdivisions to levy any tax to pay premiums for fire and tornado insurance upon their public buildings, the interest upon the accumulated profits being sufficient to pay for all overhead charges, and all losses due to fire and tornado. A desperate effort is being made by the insurance companies to break down the compulsory feature of this law, which provides that all fire and tornado insurance upon public buildings must be placed with the state department.

If the insurance companies can break this down, it will be some years before the fund becomes large enough to take care of the losses from the interest upon the capital built up, because the profits will be diverted to private insurance companies, and dissipated in high overhead. The insurance companies fear the ultimate success of this department, and do not want it to spread to other states. Two years ago, legislation passed to destroy the insurance funds was vetoed by a Nonpartisan League governor. Both houses had opposition majorities at that time, the Senate being anti-Nonpartisan League by one vote.

The greatest success of all the insurance ventures, however, is the Hail Insurance Fund. This is a mutual proposition, the state acting as agent in collecting the premiums and adjusting losses, the losses being pro-rated among the farmers. In this manner the average premiums have been kept to about one-half of the amounts formerly charged by the private hail-insurance companies, and the risk of having the company go into bankruptcy when it came time to pay the losses, as had sometimes happened, was eliminated. The law provides that all lands are automatically insured, unless the farmer personally withdraws his land from the insurance. The records show that over thirty millions of dollars have been saved in premiums to the farmers of the state since 1919. The insurance companies have tried for years to make the insurance voluntary, and to change the law so that the farmer must make application for insurance, instead of being automatically insured. Such a law was passed during the legislative session two years ago, but the Nonpartisan League governor vetoed it, and saved the Hail Insurance Fund for the farmers.

One of the most controversial state industries is the Bank of North Dakota. It has functioned ever since 1919, accepting public and private deposits. The Bank made a profit of 17 percent on its $2,000,000 capital, for the year ending September 30, 1928. In addition to the banking feature, the Bank of North Dakota makes farm loans, approximately thirty million dollars' worth of real-estate bonds having been sold, thus providing funds which are loaned to the farmers at 6 and 6½ percent, whereas real-estate mortgages were drawing from 8 to 10 percent some years ago, when loans were made exclusively by banks and loan corporations. The Bank of North Dakota is a remarkable success, and this despite the fact that it is managed and controlled by officials opposed to the Nonpartisan League, unfavorable to the enterprise, and hostile toward state ownership.

The most controversial of all the state projects, however, is the State Mill and Elevator. The opposition to the Nonpartisan League has directed its fire especially upon this industry, largely because the nature of the institution did not enable it to make a profit above interest on milling and construction bonds, plus large depreciation charges on the huge concrete bins. It has consistently made an operating profit, however. This fact has not reached even the voters of North Dakota, because the daily press has been bitterly hostile to the industry, suppressing the fact of operating profits, while it headlines the alleged losses, arrived at by charging high depreciation, and including the interest upon bonds sold to construct the Mill and Elevator.

A recent audit of the State Mill and Elevator by an auditor and accountant employed by the anti-Nonpartisan League faction states that during the period Jan. 1, 1928, to Jan. 7, 1929, the mill operated about 40 percent capacity, manufacturing 515,324 barrels of flour, as compared with 456,713 barrels in 1927. The report shows an operating profit of $138,110.25 in 1928, as compared to $166,477.32 in 1927. The report then hastens to add that these profits are offset by the items of interest and depreciation, the interest amounting to $175,298.60 during the past year. The bonds are being paid off by taxation, as is the interest, much as bonds for any public building are

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paid by means of tax levies. The faction opposed to the Nonpartisan League has insisted upon charging the interest on the bonds to the operating costs for the brief period that the bonds run, in order to make the plant show a loss, instead of 3 percent profit on the $4,500,000 investment, which the operating profit amounts to.

Another important factor not registered on the profit-and-loss sheet is the establishment of a wheat-testing laboratory at the State Mill and Elevator whereby farmers and farmers' elevators may have samples of their grain tested, thus obliging the large milling companies to pay for the protein, a premium amounting in many instances to hundreds of dollars on a single carload of wheat. A further benefit is the lowering of flour prices approximately $2 per barrel as a result of the competition from the production and sale of flour by the State Mill.

On the whole, the state industries started by North Dakota in 1919 have been a success, and were it not for misrepresentation of the facts throughout the state and nation, other states would follow its example. The Nonpartisan League is still a power in North Dakota.

ALFRED S. DALE.

# The Customs Men Keep Us Pure

## *Still Another Censorship, and How It Operates*

"CANDIDE," recently pounced upon in Boston by the customs authorities as an obscene book, is now in Washington awaiting a bill of health. After many years of corruptive influence it has finally been intercepted, under that provision of our tariff law which shuts our gates to naughty books and pictures. In Washington, in the Customs Bureau, Uncle Sam keeps a couple of lawyers who distinguish the smutty from the classic.

The tariff law, to be sure, has banned obscene literature since 1842. But somehow nobody ever dared to classify "Candide" as that, and for all these years it has been demoralizing Americans freely. That, thanks to the Customs Service, is no longer possible, for "Candide" is on the government blacklist and cannot be obtained except through libraries and bookstores. Although the ruling on the confiscated edition has not yet been made, there is little hope for it. Even a person who cannot read might be ruined by it. The nabbed "Candide" contains a picture illustrating the most shocking passage, in an edition already on the blacklist.

The blacklist contains all those books which examiners at the various ports of entry have, in their wisdom, deemed obscene. Before it was drawn up, in 1927, each examiner or customs collector relied on his own judgment. Now the federal authorities have given him an official guide. But he can still play literary censor to any book not on the list. He does not even have to appeal to the connoisseurs in Washington, unless the importer protests. When these sages hold their noses the book is denied entry, and only the decision of a federal judge, if the importer be persistent, can take it off the blacklist. Such, however, are the ideas of federal judges on obscenity that the customs censors have never been overruled. Their blacklist includes:

"The Decameron," by Boccaccio
Rousseau's "Confessions"
"Lady Chatterley's Lover," by D. H. Lawrence
Frank Harris's "My Life"
Frank Harris's "My Life and Loves"
Krafft-Ebing's "Psychopathia Sexualis"
"The Well of Loneliness," by Radclyffe Hall
"Thousand and One Nights"
"Daphnis and Chloe," by Longus
"Abelard and Heloise," by de Kock
"Radiant Motherhood," by Dr. Marie Stopes
"My First Thirty Years," by Gertrude Beasley
The Works of Rabelais
Balzac's "Droll Tales"
"Aphrodite," by Pierre Louÿs
James Joyce's "Ulysses"
"The Wild Party," by J. M. March
"The Golden Ass," of Lucius Apuleius
The Love Books of Ovid
"The Memoirs of Casanova"
"Gamiani," by Musset
"Lysistrata," by Aristophanes
"Mademoiselle de Maupin," by Gautier (Spanish translation)
"What Happens," by John Herrmann

Approximately 800 books have fallen under the ban, mainly French and Spanish. This does not mean that a listed book, if decently expurgated, would be turned down. No censor would throw up the bars to the edition of "The Arabian Nights" used in our schools. Books like "The Well of Loneliness," however, cannot be squeezed into respecta-

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bility, as long as the federal censors continue to argue, as they do, that "The whole theme is lascivious."

Before the list was drawn up there was much dissension, not only among the customs censors, but between them and the post-office ones, who have a lower shocking point. In 1927 they warned Albert Boni not to mail a catalogue merely advertising the "Decameron" which (for shame!), the customs censor had allowed into the country. Uncle Sam was in despair at this wrangling between his children, but Boni demanded his books. A conference was held between the censors and the sinners in the office of Lincoln C. Andrews, then Assistant Secretary of the Treasury. General Andrews asked for uniformity of censorship and released the "Decameron" until this highly desirable result could be obtained. The blacklist which resulted from this noble gathering includes the "Decameron."

Recently the post-office censors again played an exemplary part to their more wanton brethren. The customs authorities had never turned away seditious literature. But in the new tariff bill such a provision has been added. It was drafted by a committee of customs officials who decided that it was senseless to admit this kind of literature when the Post Office has been banning it from the mails for years. If the tariff bill passes with that amendment—and surely we can expect no opposition from our legislators—Karl Marx, Proudhon, Bakunin and even some of Bertrand Russell will be as inhospitably treated as poor old Boccaccio and Rabelais.

What Congress, which passes the laws against obscene literature, regards as vile and indecent cannot be ascertained, for it has never put itself on record. The courts, however, have, and it is their decisions which the customs censors use for guidance. From their report to General Andrews it would appear that any judge of obscenity must have his mind centered upon a little girl with long yellow curls who lived about twenty years ago. It reads:

> In passing upon such literature the Bureau of Customs has considered, primarily, its evil influence upon the impressionable minds of those persons the statutes, according to the courts, aim to protect, *i. e.*, the young and inexperienced. In examining the text it is sought to determine if the psychological effect of the language would be to create in the mind of the individual libidinous thoughts, and unduly excite the sexual functions or arouse the animal passions. The main reason advanced by applicants for entry of the objectionable literature is that certain of the books are "classics."

The censor's is not an enviable task, and only in heaven can he hope for his reward. When he blacklists a book, it can still reappear to annoy him. Like the fellow who is broke, the "classics" are recurrently bobbing up, in a new edition, cannily devised by the foreign publisher to fool him. Unable to read every edition of these pretentious books, he has formulas by which he can determine their moral status at once. Given a copy of the "Decameron," he turns to the first story of the third day. Is it "The Dumb Gardener"? Then the book is, without further prying, obscene. To play safe he may look for "The Nightingale" story. Those two brand the "Decameron" for the federal censor. "Venial Sin" gives away Balzac's "Droll Stories." By means of these formulas a person wouldn't have to be exceptionally literate to enact the censor's role.

Shakespeare and the Bible, by a sort of gentleman's agreement, remain untrammelled by the censors. The decision of one judge who said "anyone objecting to such works being carried through the mails would be laughed at for his prudery" may be responsible, or it may be the fear of God. At any rate, in the above-mentioned report they were absolved from obscenity. It said:

> A "classic" should be defined and distinction should be recognized as between the Bible and the *bona fide* literary classics (such as Shakespeare, Chaucer, Pope, Swift and many others) on the one hand, wherein the obscene passages are incidental to the voluminous text of the superb literature, and the alleged "classics," cleverly conceived by modern editions in an ancient medieval atmosphere, wherein obscenity is the motif.

The customs censors have not been as badly hit by criticism as those in the Post Office Department. Perhaps because they are a little more brazen. Whereas the post-office censors, as we have seen in a previous article, are ashamed of their activities and refuse to discuss them, these fellows will readily unlock the metal case holding Rabelais and Voltaire and Marie Stopes and let you "judge for yourself." The lawyer who does the naughty reading (he has one or two superiors to confer with) is actually a red-faced, regular fellow who in Ovid and Apuleius haven't undermined a bit. Is it good support for censorship to have the reader of the world's vilest books so apparently healthy and pleasant?

Another way in which the government fails to support its own censorship is through the Congressional Library. Why weren't "Ulysses" and "The Well of Loneliness" kicked out of the Library when they were put on the government blacklist? Why does the Library, under the protection given government packages from the censor's claws, import books which are unfit for little girls with long yellow curls? And if the tariff law passes with the amendment against seditious literature, what will the Library do with its seventy-five volumes by and about Lenin, its twenty volumes by and on Trotsky, the Stalin books, the one hundred Marx books, the four hundred and eighty revolutionary posters used to incite the Russian masses? It is a problem, indeed.

DUFF GILFOND

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# Washington Notes

WITH Congress off his hands for two months, Mr. Hoover is presented with the same sort of opportunity from which his little predecessor so greatly benefited during the five successive summers of his White House tenancy. He will be—or ought to be—the sole source of news for the hundred and more newspaper correspondents left in Washington, eager for a daily "story" and conceiving themselves under the necessity of getting one. While Congress is in session it manufactures vastly more news than all other branches of the government combined. As a matter of fact, it produces so much more news than can be adequately marketed or journalistically consumed that there is regularly a surplus comparable to the well known wheat surplus. And as in the case of wheat, a great deal of news goes completely to waste and values sink to low levels.

But when the season changes and Congress shuts up shop the news situation is very different. Instead of a surplus there is then a scarcity. The value of stories rapidly rises. Incidents and items which, while the congressional wheels were whirling, would not have received five lines in a small-town paper, are expanded into display-head articles in the metropolitan journals. With the President on the job and members of Congress scattered far and wide, the twice-a-week White House press conferences loom much larger. This was Mr. Coolidge's dish. He fed to the avid journalists who gathered in his office Tuesdays and Fridays a steady diet of platitudinous inanities the triviality of most of which they succeeded in hiding, and a considerable part of which they managed to make appear virile, even thoughtful.

I may be mistaken, but I do not believe that the Hoover press conferences during the recess are going to work out that way. Even with the Republican organs there will, I believe, be a less effective presentation of the White House point of view than under the former administration. Probably the primary cause is the difference between the two men. Mr. Coolidge loved to talk about little things, dwelt lingeringly over trivial matters, shrank from discussion of big ones. Mr. Hoover has no gift for unimportant minutiæ. He has organized his press conferences with the view of preventing the correspondents from putting relatively insignificant questions to him. Under his system these are handled by one or the other of his secretaries, and the questions that reach him from the "newspaper boys" do not deal with departmental details but with government policies, which very often he does not care to, or is not in a position to discuss.

The net result of this system has been blighting to the conferences. Occasionally there will come from Mr. Hoover an important announcement, but three times out of four the conferences are barren of results, because, not wanting to discuss the larger questions, the President has no small ones to fall back upon. Now, this may be efficient from one angle, but I contend that it is inefficient from the other. It may save Mr. Hoover time and annoyance, but it certainly robs the conferences of their main value for the President. It deprives him, that is, of the chance to promote his own ideas, aims, and personality, through using the press without seeming to, which is one of the easiest things in the world for a President to do—or for almost any public man to do, for that matter. In other words, the presidential propaganda suffers under the Hoover system. And, in addition, the "newspaper boys" sulk and turn sour on him. I concede that their state of mind is not vital to a President who is "going good"; but it takes on importance in proportion to the strength of the opposition to him, and to the poisonous nature of the animosities he creates. Mr. Hoover, I think, has no appreciation of this point of view. Perhaps if he knew more of politics he would understand it. He does know the value of publicity, and is as sensitive to unfavorable printed comment as any man in public life. What he does not know is the news value of small stuff during a recess of Congress. By refusing to discuss trivialities with the correspondents he has put a crimp in the most effective form of presidential propaganda. The correspondents dote on trivialities, and so do the American people. They are easy to read and easy to write.

From the standpoint of practical politics it is a mistake for the President to avoid small things. It is a mistake to let it be seen that they bother him. It is a mistake to turn all the small stuff over to his secretariat. A good political propagandist would never do that. Mr. Hoover has his full share of the human love of the favorable printed word. He is not at all averse to propagandizing himself, but he is not very good at the job. Somebody ought to take him in hand right away if the real advantage to him of the congressional recess is not to be lost. Also, that person ought to tell him not to take the Senate so seriously, to snap out of what seems to be a state of depression which he did not exhibit in the Department of Commerce, to lighten his gloom, to give the idea that there is some slight degree of enjoyment in his job. He has not fared so badly at the hands of Congress. Actually he has so far suffered nothing but delay and the defeat on national origins. That, however, was not a major issue at this session, and he made no real fight. So far as the rest is concerned there appears no cause for the sort of grief into which the "Chief" seemed plunged by the various evidences of revolution and recalcitrancy in the Senate. He got his farm-relief bill through in exactly the shape he wanted. He got the reapportionment bill through, with a provision which automatically guards against any violation and ignoring of the Constitution on this subject in the future.

As to the tariff, he may or he may not get a bill that he likes or that the country will accept without hostile reaction. Admittedly, the tariff situation in the Senate is badly scrambled, with noble Jim Watson, the administration leader, openly against the administration's limited-revision idea and with Borah leading a Democratic-insurgent band—just one short of a majority—and determined to prevent an increase on anything not produced on the farm. But as I have pointed out before, the Hoover position in this fight is strategically strong. Only very bad luck or very great ineptitude can prevent his holding the balance of power between the two factions. And the veto gives him the whip hand. Curiously enough,

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the Democrats are so anxious not to give him an excuse to veto the tariff bill that it is doubtful whether they will support the debenture plan as a tariff-bill amendment, although it is far more logical to do so than to have tried to plaster it on the farm-relief bill. The Democrats are afraid of losing an issue. Altogether, the divisions and dissensions in the Senate are such as to encourage the Hoover hopes of a tariff outcome which will be reasonably satisfactory to him. But you would never guess this to see or talk with him.

T. R. B.

Washington.

# Some Russian Films

IT IS clear that if the silent movies are going to make any stand against the talkies, they will find their firmest ally in the films made by the Russians; and it is barely possible that the persistence of the silent film, if it does persist, will be due to the incorporation in American movies of something of the spirit and something of the technique of these comparative newcomers in the field.

Several of these films are already familiar; one, "Mother," is not to be shown here—as the moral problem does not enter, the censorship must have been exercised on political grounds; another, "Storm over Asia," the reputed masterpiece of Pudowkin, who made "The End of St. Petersburg," is scheduled for elaborate presentation next season; and "The New Babylon," a film of the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune in Paris, will probably appear shortly. These films, with "Potemkin" and "Ten Days That Shook the World," tell us enough about the general direction of the Soviet films, and what they tell us is extremely important.

The first point is that all of them are possessed of moral fervor far more intense than we are accustomed to, not only in our films (which almost entirely lack any element of morality), but in all of our arts. All our satire on the stage, all our "grim realism" in fiction, is trivial in comparison. The Russians who make these films have a new religion, and their religion is a constant force in their artistic expression; these films dynamically illustrate the truth of Dr. Dewey's essential observation on Soviet Russia, that the real revolution took place in the souls of Russian men and women.

Obviously, the films are propaganda. I dislike propaganda in works of art and am not excessively sympathetic to the principles of communism; if I were I might not be annoyed at the silly omission of Trotsky from historical pictures, nor quite so amused at the speeding up of the film to show that, as soon as the exploiters are dethroned, sewing machines run more easily and speedily, and bent and haggard sempstresses sing at their work. The propaganda is a nuisance; but it gives all these pictures their force, and even their integrity. Our films have usually been made without passion, without conviction of any sort; "The Birth of a Nation" was exceptional in its time, and Griffith tried once again, in "Intolerance," where his passion fell over into a sort of fanaticism against fanatics.

The reason the Russian propaganda is acceptable is that you never feel the picture being twisted to give a communist happy ending. While the pictures unroll you feel intellectually what the directors obviously feel spiritually: that the triumph of Soviet Russia is the single desirable thing in the world, making all things right. Except in the historical films, the directors seem to come to their conclusions by internal necessity; and that is why you can say that the pictures are prejudiced and argumentative and moralistic—and still have artistic integrity. If you do not share their theories of economics, you may find that passion misdirected; but you will not find it feeble.

Enthusiasts for the Russian films have often been unable to separate the cinematic from the economic, and have apparently been willing to start a red revolution in Britain and America, in order to produce an Eisenstein or a Pudowkin. If the revolution could be localized in the Balkan territories of Hollywood, I should think it worth while; otherwise, I fancy we can learn from Pudowkin and Eisenstein without accepting Stalin as an article of faith. The one thing we cannot learn is to have passion, to have religion, and to have no sequence in any film without them. That is a gift from God.

The two great directors I have mentioned are profound students of cinematics and good theorists; yet, seeing their work and that of their compatriots, one fancies that the freshness of these Russians comes from not having seen too many other films. Take a specific instance. In all American films since "The Big Parade," if a regiment is marching away, or a thousand trucks roll by, the hero or heroine staggers through the lines, fighting off the men or trucks, trying to make his or her way to the beloved and departing one. The scene even occurs in "The Singing Fool," where Jolson battles with taxicabs. In "The New Babylon," there are ranks of marching soldiers—and one man standing absolutely motionless, his soul trampled while his body remains erect. I do not say that this is better than the hysterics of the American parallel; but it is fresh, individual; you feel again the emotion which repetition has staled.

In "Ten Days," at a Soviet congress, people sat and talked for what seemed to be hours. I suspect that this was due to a desire to allow a representative of each of the nationalities of Great Russia to appear; it made a pretty bad central section of what should have been a good movie. Here you had freshness of the most amateur kind—by the maker of "Potemkin"! In almost all Russian films of the last year a statue figures, sometimes a few dozen statues. That of Peter the Great on horseback has fallen again and again; Justice appears frequently; Love, also; and in "The New Babylon" a socialist hammer strikes a single blow and the Vendôme column falls. These are the weaknesses of film symbolism. But in "Mother," a river breaks through its covering of ice, and when the hero is about to escape from prison his mind turns to the river over which he must go, and you have definite imagery, profoundly moving. In "The Village of Sin," a single exquisite shot of peasants mowing the waving wheat expressed everything; one wanted to know of the aspiration of simple Russians for security, ease, and earnestness of life.

The directors are creating movies to influence the lives of simple and emerging souls. Their contrasts are all black and white: the bourgeois with his clean cuffs and cigars as monotonous as the moustached villain and the doctor

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looking at his watch, in American films. In "Ten Days" the strangled horse hangs from the top of the drawbridge through almost half the picture; in "Storm over Asia" you have alternating shots of Mongolian priests being arrayed for a ritual and a general and his lady (looking as British as can be) being decked in social finery; in "The End of St. Petersburg" you have alternating shots of the front and the Bourse. This system of cutting, which is one of the many things called *montage,* is so overdone that the essence of the picture escapes, for the unit of cinematic utterance is not a single picture or a single foot of pictures, but whatever length of film constitutes a sequence. The Russians have alternated rhythms so rapidly that all rhythm escapes.

Yet their essential idea is correct: the film must be so made, cut, and arranged as to impose a series of emotions on the spectator. They give you the effect of the lapse of time by showing you a blacksmith at his anvil and, showing the hammer at various points of the descent, interpolating other events, near or distant; their principle, a correct one, is that the more distant the interpolated event, the greater the lapse of time in the feeling of the spectator; but when too many events intervene, one loses the sense of the action of the hammer on the anvil.

The flicking of the camera back and forth, from one event to a contrasting event, reached its extreme in "Ten Days" where Kerensky's walk up endless stairs (an overworked piece of imagery) was broken into hundreds of little pieces. The eye refuses to follow unless it has a sequence. But in "Storm over Asia" this technical trick is in a secondary place. The film has more of a definite story, it has a hero; were it not for its abiding passion, one would say that "Storm over Asia" marks a slight Americanization of the Soviet's film ideas. Pudowkin has a new method of bringing things up to the camera by three stages, through which the spectator progresses as he used to progress in watching the old films of a railroad track taken from the back of a train. He mingles his realism with straight adventure—fist fights, machine-guns blazing; he throws his picture out of balance by over-documented photography of a Mongolian religious festival, and restores it by the passion and irony of his story. There is no missing the solid feeling of life in this picture, no missing the powerful rhythm, as simple as heartbeats, on which it is built.

The hero of "Storm over Asia" is played by a professional actor, himself a Mongolian, attached to one of the Russian theaters. His performance will instantly rank him with Jannings, perhaps higher. The rest of the Mongolians are non-professionals, like the mobs in the historical films, like nearly everyone, including the leading actress, of Eisenstein's new film, "The General Line," which is not yet finished. A great deal is made of these amateurs, and they are compared to our professional movie stars and mobs. There is a confusion of ideas here. First, because the grizzled faces and toothless gums and odd-shaped skulls of the *moujik* and the Russian factory worker or beggar are unfamiliar to us, they impress us excessively. Second, hardly anyone in the American movie has learned movie-acting. When we compare the Russians to them we are comparing fresh players who do what good directors tell them, to pretty girls or handsome men who are still under the influence of stage-acting. The amateurs in Russia are being made temporarily into movie players; the professionals in America are still acting on the stage.

GILBERT SELDES.

# Vista

I HAVE lately been turning over in my mind a good deal, with regard to the theater season just ended, two pictures. One of these is a Tintoretto in the collection of Mr. Arthur Sachs, Christ by the waves, the incident of the apostles walking on the water. There Christ stands with his hand uplifted, farther away the other figures on the sea, the little boat, the clouds and sky and land. The passionate and most arbitrary heaven that the painter has designed, with that gray and white, the rendering of the waves, too, and of the red garment and the flesh, the clean and brilliant brush strokes in the figure, and, most of all, that strange, unearthly poetry and power and energy, these are what make this painting one of Tintoretto's most moving works and one of the beautiful pictures in the world.

The other picture everybody knows, at least in prints: Velasquez's "Las Meniñas" in the Prado. The little maids, the dwarf, the artist in the rear, the great room, that air between the figures, that poised brush and perfect luminous unity of tone—of all painting in its kind this picture is supreme.

These are summits in painting, one for its high style, the rich, heroic quality of color and bold design, sharpened here and there by that curious, fiery realism of Tintoretto's; the other for its naturalism of approach, made distinguished by the technical rendering, and superb and suave by the mind of the painter and the life of the epoch that underlie the conception and subject-matter.

In the theater art there are two great ideal elements. One is the high style, the distillation of the dramatic material into what has fine tone, distinction of technical rendering, and a deep living content. Toward this great manner, whether poetic or prose, Tintoretto or Velasquez, all art in the theater, in so far as it is to be taken seriously, must move. The other element is the spring of life that enters into art, the flood of gusto and energy, the pulse and glow. Without this vital energy, art, however stocked with craft, tradition or lavish expense, has no promise in it.

We need not press these two points and this comparison any further, but it can do no harm to store them at the back of one's head, and then go on to review for oneself the season that has now come to a close.

We hear constantly of the movietone, and how the talkies are going to cripple the theater; there are even people who predict that by next Christmas 50 percent of the New York theaters now given over to plays and actors will be devoted to the talkies. Well, whatever amount of truth there may be in these prophecies, the two things to be said about the matter are, first, that nothing can ever take the place of the theater at its best, when it is most strictly within its own terms and has something to say in those terms; no other medium can repeat its peculiar qualities and benefits; second, that if the theater can do no better than it did in many cases this season, the sooner the cutting down begins the better. There were exceptions to

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the general flatness, of course. It must be remembered, too, that even in our country, where so much can be done by energy inspired by the dream of success, and by money driven to defy possibility by the dream of more money, we cannot hope for immortal masterpieces every season—if our theater evolved a great play a generation we should be creating the noblest record in the history of drama. But below that pinnacle there are lesser excellences that we may pray for, and that in a fashion we have a right to demand. To demand from whom? From the dramatists, from the actors, from the producers, from ourselves? The question may well wait for an answer.

The most beautiful performance of the year, by all odds, was that of Madame Nazimova in "The Cherry Orchard"—a production at least creditable, except for the male roles, by the Civic Repertory Theater. Madame Nazimova did a piece of acting that fully redeemed the devious trumperies and trash, on the stage and in the films, that this actress has allowed herself to be Hollywooded into these last ten years. It was a performance so subtle, so poignant, with so much intelligent design and such lovely stage movement, that it must remain unforgettable. Mr. Henry Travers gave a very subtly graded and carefully studied portrayal of the old man in "The Camel through the Needle's Eye" at the Theater Guild. In "Caprice," another Theater Guild production, Miss Lynn Fontanne and Mr. Alfred Lunt provided the best illustration of *rapport* in acting, the best ensemble playing that we have seen since that first visit of the Moscow Art Theater; though they appeared in a poor piece, and the best of their qualities plainly derived not from any perfection in ensemble on the part of the theater but from their own efforts, working together, and their manifest absorption—above that of any other actors on our stage—in the stage art and its inexhaustible necessities.

In the various revues and musical comedies the customary good dancing and expert manner of pulling things off in general was to be seen, often bang-up indeed and highly proficient. The best of the dancing and the richest gusto seemed to me to be in "Blackbirds," the all-colored revue, where the Negro warmth, genuinely persuasive rhythm and beat, and glowing quality of voice, seemed to humanize and make more infectious the stir and gaiety aimed at in this form of American entertainment. The pretty clowning of Mr. Eddie Cantor, always drifting, inventive, and fluent in stage line and posture, sometimes lovable and full of real point and whim, sometimes more than he need be given to wise-cracking and smarty ways, has shone in "Whoopee" throughout the season.

Of settings the diversity of effort culminated in at least one piece of décor that was of the first order: Mr. Robert Edmond Jones's designs for "Serena Blandish"; though the scope of the material precluded the fullest use of his imaginative gifts. Compared to what he had a few years ago, this season has provided him but little opportunity.

Of production, taken as one of the arts of the theater, there was no outstanding example. "Street Scene" had a certain patient and laborious realistic detail and a shrewd type-casting, carried as far as that can go; and was applauded by many for the lifelike results in the whole effect.

There remain the plays themselves. Of these, again, "Street Scene" got the Pulitzer prize and has been heavily praised. It is a play of small talent but much well tried device and imitation. It has numberless supposed copies of reality, in the persons and the Ninth Avenue locale, and was even called photographic and admired or disliked because of that. As a matter of fact, the kind of actuality it showed was only stage reality, details quite familiar to the footlights and assigned where we expect them. As a play "Street Scene" is entertaining until the last act, which is not created at all but is only a tedious business of ending the play, with an idea or sermon superimposed—a good instance of idea not yet created into the art in hand.

Of the other plays, "Dynamo," Eugene O'Neill's play with which the Theater Guild followed "Strange Interlude," came short on the whole. "The Front Page" carried on the "Broadway," "Chicago" tradition of crooks, police, bootleg, newspapers, murder, et cetera, without being so good as the two earlier pieces.

An importation from London represented, in a way, the cerebral effort of the season. "Wings over Europe," by Robert Nichols and Maurice Browne, had a theme—man's use of knowledge and power, man's reception of salvation and ideas—and achieved a solid degree of success with a limited public. Another English importation, "Journey's End," would be pronounced by most of the people who have seen it as not only the play of the year, but the best play of the War, and, some have said so at least, a very great play. It is not a great play, but is a most moving and beautiful one. In its actual writing, in the words and the dialogue of certain scenes especially, "Journey's End" is often mediocre. But its appeal lies in its searching and poignant dramatic story, which, by the way, did not have to be set in the War but could have been anywhere—an expedition to Alaska, say—that would throw the characters into this tense and tragic relation that they have to one another. The story, the telling curtains, the study of the central character—very well acted—the theme of the hero worship of a young lad, the beautiful and tender and deep lyric source of "Journey's End" are what make it capable of holding us and moving us so profoundly.

The most significant effort in the year's theater, speaking accurately, with an eye on the theater art, was "Serena Blandish"; and to say this would surprise many people seriously interested in the subject. The significance is not quite because of the play, which was but a fair dramatization of a whimsical English novel, but rather because of the directing, the capital acting of Miss Ruth Gordon and Mr. Henry Daniel, and, most of all, the whole intention that lay behind Mr. Jed Harris's production. "Serena Blandish" tried for a free world of imagination, caprice, play, wit and non-morality; its air was delightful and fantastic, worldly and yet unreal, its feet without prose support, its characters without any bound or insistent verisimilitude. It allowed for style, for the rustle of bright wings, for unrealities in speed, motivation and social systems, for the stuff, in sum, that dreams are made of in the theater art. Without being important, "Serena Blandish" was significant in a much-slighted direction: our theater needs to clear its method of a dead level of middle-class realism, leading to no accuracy of observation or truth, no profundity, style or high final technical excellence; and to achieve for itself more of a certain freedom special to art.

STARK YOUNG.

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# CORRESPONDENCE

## Aid for the Textile Strikers

SIR: The Emergency Committee for Strikers' Relief, since May 1, has transmitted more than $6,000 for necessary relief to striking textile workers in the South, and to striking shoe workers in Massachusetts. Specifically, $4,550 has ben sent to the rayon strikers in Elizabethton, Tenn.; $1,000 to the textile strikers near Greenville, S. C.; $500 to the United Shoe Workers in Boston, Mass.; and $50 to the textile strikers in Gastonia, N. C., through the Workers' International Relief.

This relief has been of inestimable importance, but is not sufficient. Approximately 5,000 operatives in and near Greenville, S. C., are now striking in protest against the "stretch-out" system, and new strikes are occurring weekly. The "settlement" at Elizabethton, Tenn., is at best a truce; the basic causes of unrest—miserably low wages, long weary hours, and industrial feudalism—still remain.

Contributions to the relief fund should be sent to Forrest Bailey, Room 931, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

NORMAN THOMAS.

New York City.

## Catholics and Birth Control

SIR: A number of points relative to Catholicism and birth control have been neglected by Mr. Patrick J. Ward and by those replying to him.

Mr. Ward has no conception of the law of diminishing returns or of optimum population; consequently he sees no relation between the maintenance of the latter and the practice of birth control.

Mr. Ward says nothing of the Catholic confessor's frequent counsel to multiparous mothers to confine cohabitation to the so-called "safe period." Mr. Ward would have to admit such counsel to be hypocritical, for the intent is, as when mechanical, chemical, etc., means are employed, to prevent reproduction.

Mr. Ward quotes Forel, Beale, etc., to support his contention that sexual continence is harmless. Such quotation is idle, for anyone can marshal as many quotations to the contrary from such eminent sexologists as Ellis, Bloch, etc. Were Mr. Ward to mingle with mankind, the impossibility of general continence would be manifest to him. Only priests and others with sublimated libidos are unaware of this.

Mr. Ward quotes from Dr. Fishbein to the effect that no method has been devised which is fool-proof. Mr. Ward is, apparently, unaware of the 97-percent perfect results of the American Birth Control League and of their dealing with all phases of the problem. Would that medicine were as effective in other fields! Mr. Ward quotes Dr. Krohn to the effect that contraceptive practices cause neurasthenia, but does not add that this neurasthenia arises either from the use of unsatisfactory devices, or from conditions peculiar to a minority of patients.

Mr. Ward failed to quote the metaphysical argument set forth by Father J. A. Ryan in The Forum (July, 1927):

> Contraception "is a frustration of faculty. The faculty is so used that it cannot attain its primary end. . . . The faculty is compelled to defeat itself. This is an inherent contradiction and makes the act intrinsically wrong."

Thus contraception is wrong *per se*. *"Hence the intrinsic principle is the only one that is comprehensive and effective."* Father Ryan's words, rather than Mr. Ward's left-handed arguments, formulate the basic doctrine of the Catholic Church. Yet the ridiculousness of Father Ryan's argument is so self-evident as to require no refutation. It is suspect even on metaphysical grounds.

The dialecticians who advance the Catholic argument as formulated by Father Ryan admit of reason as a faculty. And what they call "reason" impels birth control. Hence the thinking Catholic is in a dilemma. If he practises birth control, he frustrates the primary end of the generative faculty and commits a mortal sin. If he fails to practise birth control when his reason so dictates, he frustrates the primary end of reason as a faculty.

Father Ryan believes that the "intuition which pronounces the practice wrong" will lead Catholics and others to avoid contraception. Curiously, however, 26.2 percent of the New York and 32.8 percent of the Chicago applicants to the Birth Control League are Catholics. They did not perceive the intuitive warning.

In reality it is as absurd to discuss birth control with a Catholic as it is to discuss evolution with a Mississippi Baptist. The sound program consists in taking a leaf from the Catholic book and in forcing through every legislature a law legitimatizing the contraception which almost all practise, or try to practise.

Columbus, O. JOSEPH J. SPENGLER.

## "Naturalizing" the First Voter

SIR: An impressive and interesting ceremony attends the naturalization of a foreigner who becomes a citizen of the United States. It is preceded by study, public examination, the taking of a solemn oath, and, not infrequently, a lecture by a judge and the awarding of honors by a patriotic society.

When an American-born citizen reaches the age of twenty-one and becomes a voter, that fact is viewed as a matter of course. Formal cognizance may consist only of a statement by his "old man" that henceforth he must pay his way in the world.

Why should we not have classes for first voters, something which would make arrival at the voting age a real event and one to be remembered? There might be appropriate exercises, and perhaps a certificate, to be awarded only after the new voter has shown that he is at least as good a candidate for citizenship as the foreigner who is naturalized. We should have better and more truly American Citizens, if this were done.

JOHN L. MEYER,
Managing Editor, The National Printer Journalist.

Milwaukee, Wis.

## A Visit from President Borno

SIR: According to advices received from Haiti, the American people will witness in a few days one of the most undignified attempts for the maintenance of self in power and the continued enslavement of a people, when Mr. Borno, the illegal President of Haiti, goes to Washington, in order to forestall the withdrawal of the U. S. Military Occupation from this sister republic, a return to constitutional government and thus assure his reëlection for a third time.

For this purpose, he was voted on the seventeenth of May, the sum of $6,200 for traveling purposes by his twenty-one Counsellors of State, a group, so-called, to fool the American public, but regarded by most Haitians as a disreputable body, since it is composed of the nominees of Mr. Borno and not chosen generally from the best elements of Haitian life.

Gagged by a law forbidding public subscriptions, the Union Patriotique d' Haiti cannot send selegates to the United States to protest against this plot. The Union is therefore compelled to appeal to the press, to all lovers of liberty, for help—by protesting and giving merciless publicity to these sinister plans.

JEAN G. LAMOTHE,
Secretary-General, New York Branch
of the Haitian Patriotic Union.

New York City.

## To Save Kropotkin's Papers

SIR: Will any of your readers who are admirers of Peter Kropotkin help his widow complete the preservation of his papers and manuscripts?

Some of his old friends here are circulating an appeal for a fund of one thousand dollars for that work in the Kropotkin

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Museum, the house in Moscow where he was born and where his widow lives. It is of the utmost importance that the work be done while Madame Kropotkin lives, as she is the only one familiar with all the intimate details. The signers of the appeal are: Lawrence F. Abbott, Jane Addams, John Graham Brooks, Robert E. Ely, Lillian D. Wald, and the undersigned.

We can reach directly only a few who knew Kropotkin or who admire his work as scientist, revolutionist and humanitarian. Among your readers there are many others. Will those who are interested send in contributions to me at 578 Madison Avenue, New York City?

GRAHAM ROMEYN TAYLOR.

New York City.

## A Glum Prophecy

SIR: Probably it is just as you say in your editorial note—that the new president of the New York Edison Company has been stung into action by public criticism. But most likely the consequence of that will be more mergers, new inventions in the way of obfuscating the public mind as to actual service and the legitimacy of the profits, a slightly lower rate to placate consumers, higher dividends and other accruements, more or less disguised ,for the stockholders, and an increase in salary for the presiding genius. Everybody will be made happy, including those members of the teaching trade who are ready, for a consideration, to teach anything the public utility companies order. Only they will be unhappy who favor public ownership or more drastic control in the general interest, and those old employees who were ruthlessly cast out by the score to make room for girls at much lower wages.

But such victims, it seems, this juggernaut of executive ability must have. Unfortunately, American business statesmanship, with all its inventiveness, has not yet attained a higher point in reaching out for yet larger profits than discharging part of the force and making the remainder sweat more, though it thereby decreases purchasing power. Perhaps that is because it was never sufficiently pressed to it by labor's leaders, who seem to have been busy conciliating the employers rather than serving those who paid their salaries. In such a case as this especially, the easiest course was to kick out the poor devils who had failed to learn that modern business is ruthless war, and that if they would not always be the chief victims of it they must efficiently unite their many strengths under aggressive and resourceful leaders and make intelligent use of their political power.

P. T. A. NEUMANN.

*Ozone Park, Long Island, N. Y.*

## Poe

SIR: In perusing the issue of June 19, I derived particular pleasure in observing this tribute extended to America's outstanding literary genius—Edgar A. Poe—by Gilbert Seldes in his contribution captioned, "Van Dine and His Public." For the benefit of those readers who may have been so unfortunate as to have missed your issue under discussion, permit me to quote: " . . . Gaboriau, like every Frenchman writing after Balzac, had to give the appearance of making a social study, but his novels and those of Conan Doyle purify the detective story, by developing the technique of Poe, rather than that of Collins. . . . " And continuing his reference to Doyle, " . . . he is almost as algebraic as Poe. . . . " Mr. Seldes in his lines apropos of "the contemporary detective story" proves himself honest in his critical estimate of the huge debt we, the world at large, owe to Poe, which is more than can in all fairness be remarked about many other American literary critics.

Now to another matter. Please refer to the Everyman's Library full-page advertisement, page III, and attempt to explain why among "the great books of the literature of all nations" during the period mentioned, one fails to find a single Poe item listed? Dostoyevsky, who concludes the period, was born in 1821 and died during 1881. . . .

The Edgar Allan Poe Society has, since its inception in 1920, been studying the life and works of Poe and disseminating this knowledge. True lovers of Poe are always welcome into the Society and its extremely modest annual dues place no financial barrier to membership therein.

BENTLEY MULFORD,
Director of Publicity, Edgar Allan Poe Society.

New York City.

## For Italian Refugees in France

SIR: In the spring of the year 1927, an Italian Refugee Committee was formed at Paris with a view to assisting Italian families which, having been compelled, for political reasons, to take refuge in France, found themselves in a state of great poverty, whether through illness or through lack of work.

A number of well known people in the social and political world of France joined the Committee, which is on a non-political basis and is worked in coöperation with a similar committee in London, formed a little later. Thus these two committees can boast of two years of active life, and, looking back, we can estimate the invaluable work that has been accomplished and that it is essential to continue if many needy Italian families are to be saved from misery and suffering. Families have received help during permanent or temporary illness as well as during unemployment; coal has been distributed throughout the winter to large families, and at Christmastime welcome hampers of food have been given to the most needy. Thanks to the generosity of our English friends we have been able to distribute many parcels of good second-hand clothes, which has been greatly appreciated.

One part of the work of the Committee has been the organizing, during the last two years, of a summer colony in a small villa and garden on the outskirts of Paris, to which we have sent parties of the most delicate and needy children for a few weeks' fresh air. The benefit to the children was very great; unfortunately, the expense was considerable. The sum of 4,000 francs will enable the Committee to make suitable arrangements for all the most delicate of the children, and they count confidently on the generosity of friends in America to supply part of the sum. Address M. J. Bois, Trésorier-adjoint du Comité des Réfugiés Italiens, "La Démocratie," 34, Boulevard Raspail, Paris-VIIe, France.

GIOVANNA BERNERI,
Secretary of the Committee.

Paris, France.

## The Basis of the New Immigration Law

SIR: May I correct one error you make in description of the national-origins plan of immigration restriction? In The New Republic of June, 19, 1929, you say, "Each nationality will receive an annual quota bearing the same ratio to 150,000 that the number of people of that stock living here in 1920 bore to our total white population." It is not the total white population but the white population attributable (immediately or by ancestry) to quota countries. Thus the large portion of our white population coming from countries of North and South America would not be counted in. See West's U. S. Code, Compact Edition.

CHARLES E. OZANNE.

Cleveland, O.

## What, Indeed!

SIR: In a tired editorial paragraph in The New Republic of June 19, on the conservatism of teachers, you sum the matter up in the following words: "But beyond all these things"—alleged reasons for this conservatism—"is the fundamental fact that by its very nature the teaching profession attracts those men to whom in greater or less degree"—admirable qualification is characteristic of your journal—"seclusion, security and the traditional, are especially agreeable."

Turning to page 115 of the same number, I find among the list of your editors and contributing editors the following teachers or ex-teachers: R. M. Lovett, Alvin Johnson, John Dewey, E. C. Lindeman, R. G. Tugwell, Leo Wolman.

Now what, if anything, does this prove?

N. J. WARE.

Middletown, Conn.

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# Signs of Life

*Lady Chatterley's Lover, by D. H. Lawrence. Florence: Privately Printed.*

THIS fine novel of D. H. Lawrence's has been privately printed in Florence, and it is difficult and expensive to buy. This is a pity, because it is probably one of Lawrence's best books. About the erotic and unconventional aspects of "Lady Chatterley's Lover," which have made it impossible for the book to be circulated except in this subterranean fashion, I shall have something to say in a moment. But "Lady Chatterley's Lover" is far more than the story of a love affair: it is a parable of post-war England.

Lady Chatterley is the daughter of a Scotch R. A., a robust and intelligent girl, who has married an English landowner from the Midlands coal-mining country. Sir Clifford is crippled in the War, and returns to his family estate, amid the decay and unemployment of the industrial towns. At first, he occupies himself with literature, mixes with the London literary people, and publishes short stories, "clever, rather spiteful, and yet, in some mysterious way, meaningless"; then later, he applies himself feverishly to an attempt to retrieve his coal mines by the application of modern methods: "once you started a sort of research in the field of coal-mining, a study of methods and means, a study of by-products and the chemical possibilities of coal, it was astounding the ingenuity and the almost uncanny cleverness of the modern technical mind, as if really the devil himself had lent a fiend's wits to the technical scientists of industry. It was far more interesting than art, than literature, poor emotional half-witted stuff, was this technical science of industry."

But Sir Clifford, as a result of his semi-paralytic condition, is in the same unhappy situation as the hero of "The Sun Also Rises"; and Lady Chatterley, in the meantime, has been carrying on a love affair with the gamekeeper—himself a child of the collieries, but an educated man, who has risen to a lieutenancy during the War, and then, through disillusion and inertia, relapsed into his former status. There has been an understanding between Sir Clifford and his wife that, since he is unable to give her a child himself, he will accept an illegitimate child as his heir. But Connie has finally reached a point where she feels that she can no longer stand Sir Clifford, with his invalidism, his arid intelligence and his obstinate class consciousness: she has fallen in love with the gamekeeper; and when she finally discovers that she is going to have a child, she leaves her husband and demands a divorce. We are left with the prospect of the lady and the gamekeeper going away to Canada together.

Now Lawrence's treatment of this subject is not without its aspects of melodrama. It is not entirely free from his bad habit of nagging and jeering at the characters whom he doesn't like. Poor Sir Clifford, after all, for example, no matter how disagreeable he may have become, was a man in a most unfortunate situation, for which he was in no way to blame. And, on the other hand, Mellors, the gamekeeper, has his moments of romantic bathos. Yet the characters have a certain heroic dignity, a certain symbolical importance, which enable them to carry off all this. Lawrence's theme is a high one: the self-affirmation and triumph of life in the teeth of all the destructive and sterilizing forces—industrialism, physical depletion, dissipation, careerism and cynicism—of modern England; and in general, he has given a noble account of it. The drama which he has set in movement, against the double background of the collieries and the English forests, possesses both solid reality and poetic grandeur. It is the most inspiriting book I have seen which has come out of England for a long time; and—in spite of Lawrence's occasional repetitiousness and sometimes overdone slapdash tone—one of the best written. D. H. Lawrence is indestructible: censored, exiled, snubbed, he still has more life in him than almost anybody else. And this one of his books which has been published under the most unpromising conditions and which he must have written with full knowledge of its fate—which can, indeed, hardly be said to have seen the light at all—is one of his most vigorous and brilliant.

Lawrence has adopted the policy, in this novel, of throwing over altogether our Anglo-Saxon literary conventions, and, in his descriptions of sexual experience, of calling things by their right names. The effect of this, on the whole, is happy. I will not say that the unlimited freedom in this regard which Lawrence now for the first time enjoys does not occasionally go to his head: the poetic sincerity of the gamekeeper does not quite always save his amorous rhapsodies over certain plain old English terms from being funny at the wrong time; and one finds it a little difficult to share the author's exaltation over a scene in which the lovers decorate one another with forget-me-nots in places where flowers are seldom worn. But on the other hand, he has greatly benefited by being able, in dealing with these matters, to do without symbols and circumlocutions: it tends to relieve him of the apocalyptic grandiloquence to which he has too often been addicted in his love scenes—it keeps these scenes recognizably human. I believe, in fact, that in "Lady Chatterley's Lover," Lawrence has written the best descriptions of sexual experience which have yet been done in English. It is certainly not true, as is sometimes asserted, that erotic sensations cannot or ought not to be written about. D. H. Lawrence has demonstrated here how interesting and how varied they are, and how important to the comprehension of any emotional situation where they are involved.

The truth is simply, of course, that in English we have had, since the eighteenth century, no technique—no vocabulary even—for dealing with such subjects. The French have been writing directly about sex, in works of the highest literary dignity, ever since they discarded the proprieties of Louis XIV. They have developed a classical vocabulary for the purpose. And they have even been printing for a long time, in their novels, the coarse colloquial language of the smoking-room and the streets. James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence are the first English-writing writers of our own time to print this language in English; and the effect, in the case of "Ulysses" at least, has been shocking to English readers to an extent which must seem very strange to a French literary generation who read Zola, Octave Mirbeau and Huysmans in their youth. But, beyond the question of this coarseness in dialogue, we have, as I have intimated, a special problem in dealing with sexual matters in English. For we have not the literary vocabulary of the French. We have only the coarse colloquial words, on the one hand, and, on the other, the kind of scientific words appropriate to biological and medical books—and neither kind goes particularly well in a love scene which is to maintain any illusion of glamor or romance.

Lawrence has here tried to solve this problem, and he has really been extraordinarily successful. He has, in general, handled his vocabulary well. And his courageous experiment, in "Lady Chatterley's Lover," should make it easier for the English writers of the future to deal more

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searchingly and plainly, as they are certainly destined to do, with the phenomena of sexual experience. He has evidently made the experiment at some sacrifice. I do not suppose that he has printed many copies of the original edition of "Lady Chatterley's Lover" or that he has made much money by selling them; and he has no literary rights over the edition which has been pirated and sold in America. This must be counted to Lawrence for righteousness. There can be no advance made in this direction without somebody's taking serious losses. And since "Ulysses," no English-writing novelist of first-rate merit has volunteered to do so.

EDMUND WILSON.

# Backward Peoples

*Dollars for Bullets, by Harold Norman Denny. New York: The Dial Press. 411 pages. $4.*

*Our Neighbor Nicaragua, by Floyd Cramer. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company. 243 pages. $2.50.*

*Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain over Latin America (1808-1830), by J. Fred Rippy. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press. 322 pages. $2.75.*

BEFORE undertaking his book Mr. Denny had the good sense to spend six months in Nicaragua. As correspondent of The New York Times during the stormy days of the 1926-27 revolution, he came to know personally many of the political personages of that small republic, and to possess an unusual insight into the conflicting forces which disturb its tranquillity and progress.

Although his book is in the main a narrative of events in Nicaragua since the downfall of Zalaya in 1909, when President Taft undertook to substitute dollars for bullets in the Caribbean, Mr. Denny does not hesitate to pass adverse judgment upon the practices of our State Department when the necessity arises. He recognizes that the Panama Canal and the long and divided coast line which the United States must defend enforce upon the United States a paramount interest in the peace and safety of Central America. The difficulty in Nicaragua, he believes, arises from our effort to do two mutually irreconcilable things. We are "trying to superintend Nicaragua's conduct and at the same time to preserve the Republic's political integrity." The reviewer cannot agree that these purposes are necessarily irreconcilable, although he recognizes that their attainment is exceedingly difficult. For one thing, there is so little guiding precedent.

Mr. Denny correctly states that at many points along the way the United States has exhibited "a groping, an irresoluteness, a sidestepping, a backtracking." Unfortunately, as far as Nicaragua has been concerned, our government's case has often been stronger than the public was permitted to believe. Undoubtedly a courageous publicity policy would have avoided much popular misunderstanding in 1927 and 1928. Official deliverances regarding dangers to our canal rights and the bogey of bolshevism created suspicions and hostility which should have been avoided.

To the reviewer, who has followed Nicaragua closely for several years, it seems inevitable that some mistakes should have occurred. On numerous occasions, under the knowledge available at the moment, he would have been unable to suggest alternative policies having any better hope of success than those which were adopted. What the United States has undertaken in Nicaragua is a new experiment in dealing with a backward people, an experiment which, if prosecuted with patience and perseverance, will enable that nation to develop political self-respect under her own government. To this policy but two alternatives exist: to abandon Nicaragua entirely, or to follow old-fashioned imperialistic methods and take over the country outright. The former would open her to unbounded exploitation and turn her into an international arena of friction making for war rather than peace; the latter is out of date and thoroughly discredited. In the last analysis our policy of "irreconcilable" purposes may prove a worthy contribution to the technique of intercourse with backward peoples. For the problem of the relation of advanced states to backward states does exist, and efforts to ignore it will not help to solve it.

Mr. Denny gives a clean bill of health to the bankers. He argues that, whatever may be their record elsewhere, their relations with the government of Nicaragua have been both reasonable and honorable. Contrary to common impression, the Marines have "executed a very difficult duty with great tact and forbearance." Sandino is correctly appraised as more than an ordinary bandit, but in no sense the "George Washington of Central America." Sandino has had a good international press. A good deal that he has been praised or blamed for has been merely the activities of ordinary bandit leaders who have been operating for years in jungle territory where life and property are never quite safe. Resentment against General Moncada, who treated him with less consideration than he felt he deserved, helps to explain Sandino's original decision to take the field against the Americans and all who had dealings with them.

Mr. Denny supplemented his observations on the ground by a study of State Department records and interviews with leaders and bankers in the United States. His conclusions are not dogmatic; most of them, indeed, are in the form of questions. To the reviewer this indicates that he understood the situation as well as anyone can. The trial-and-error method offers more hope than doctrinaire preconceptions in the search for an answer to the conundrum of the Caribbean.

"Our Neighbor Nicaragua" is a hurried outline of events in Nicaragua from Columbus to Sandino. The book is dedicated "To the men of the United States Marine Corps who gave their lives on Nicaraguan soil in a vain attempt to bring peace to a troubled land." The last half traverses the same ground as "Dollars for Bullets," although in a more sketchy and less critical manner. Twenty-nine pages of the book are devoted to William Walker, space surely out of proportion to the importance of the filibuster's exploits. The author is complacent towards the United States and sure of the complete inferiority of Nicaragua. The book shows evidence of having been hastily written. Although it is a blanket defense of our government's attitude, it will reassure no one who has honest doubts of the wisdom or justice of American policy towards Nicaragua.

Professor Rippy places under his microscope twenty-two years of British-American rivalry in trade, politics and territorial aggrandizement. On other occasions a severe critic of our government's present policy in Latin America, he believes that, for the period under review, Yankee diplomacy championed the cause of democracy; its "record had in it something of the heroic." And yet this period marked the awakening of a thirst for territorial expansion which was not quenched for many years afterwards. Certainly Monroe's justification of the military occupation of West Florida rested on imperialistic reasons as raw as any state has advanced in recent years, and must have sounded quite unconvincing to the anti-imperialists of the time.

Professor Rippy believes that Great Britain never desired territory in South America. What she did desire was that the United States should not expand to include

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Cuba, Florida, or Texas, and she afterwards repented her acquiescence in the sale of Louisiana. Her wish was that these should remain with her ally, Spain. Cuba and Florida were to be buffer provinces between the United States and her possessions in the West Indies. Texas was to mark the southern limit of growth for us.

In the contest for territory the United States won. The displacement of Spain and the establishment of republics in South America was likewise pleasing to us on sentimental grounds, but equally displeasing to Britain. In the struggle for trade, which England considered so necessary to her national strength, Britain's wealth and prestige conquered. It was only in the sphere of shipping that American economic competition was formidable, but the ambition of our merchant marine was a blow directed at a vital spot. Rivalry in Central America and arguments over an isthmian canal did not develop until after 1830. England's ambitions to share in Spain's trade with America under the colonial restrictions on commerce in vogue at the time were thwarted, but, as Professor Rippy points out, the United States was unable by treaty, trade agreement or otherwise to supplant England's commercial predominance in Hispanic America. From the vantage point of a century later, much of the bickering and plotting which took place between American and British consuls and diplomats in South America appears childish. Undoubtedly irrational jealousies were responsible for much unnecessary friction.

After 1856, the British government began to relax its opposition to the expanding influence of the United States. In 1898, it withdrew its naval squadron from the Caribbean and soon afterward surrendered its claim to joint control of the isthmian trade routes. Geography and manifest destiny were on the side of the United States.

Professor Rippy has portrayed with a wealth of detail the breakdown of the traditional Old World view towards the Americas and the early stages of a struggle between two powers for dominance in the Caribbean. By so doing he has increased our understanding of later events there. The Caribbean problem of today is seen to be the legitimate offspring of 1808 to 1830.

H. W. Dodds.

# A German Looks at the Peace

*Versailles, by Karl Friedrich Nowak. New York: Payson and Clarke. 287 pages. $5.*

IN THE gallery of brilliant journalistic pictures of the Peace Conference, which opened with Keynes' "Economic Consequences of the Peace" and to which the British *enfant terrible* has just added "The Aftermath," Nowak's "Versailles" arrests attention by its striking lights and shades and by its novel perspective. Broader in scope than Keynes, Nowak treats of political and psychological as well as economic aspects, and gives the Germans a prominent place in the background. Unlike Winston Churchill, who was so absorbed in his own Russian, Turkish, Irish, and other adventures that he largely lost sight of the Peace Conference, Nowak sticks closely to the exciting story of the Council of Ten, the Big Four, and the Brockdorff-Rantzau delegation.

Nowak is no tyro. In his biography of Baron Conrad, the Austrian Chief of Staff, in his "Collapse of the Central Powers," and in his "Chaos," he had already achieved distinction by the swift dramatic narrative and penetrating insight with which he recounted the Austrian and German failure. His present theme is the failure of Wilsonian idealism. Unlike the professional historian, he eschews footnotes and quotes few documents. But it is evident that he has read widely in the sources. More than that, he has interviewed the leading German actors in the great drama and woven into his story the first-hand information thus acquired. This makes for freshness, vividness, novelty. But it also gives him strong personal likes and dislikes, which are heightened by his fondness for sharp lights and shades. Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clemenceau are painted dark, while Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, from whom Nowak gained much of his direct information, stands forth in shining light—almost with a halo. Since almost the opposite is true of the Versailles pictures by Colonel House, Mr. Ray Stannard Baker, M. Tardieu and other adherents of one or another of the Allied and associated powers, Americans should certainly take a look at Nowak. He will reveal to them how millions of Germans look at the doings of the Peace Conference.

The first two-thirds of Nowak's volume is drawn mainly from materials familiar to American students. It is the story of the high idealism of the American Professor of History who fell among thieves and was robbed of his fond hopes and solemn pledges in the jungle of Old World fears, selfishness, and war-hatreds. The last third is the most valuable and interesting because of its new information and the less known German point of view. It describes the internal conflict at Berlin between Erzberger and Brockdorff-Rantzau. The former, who had negotiated the Armistice, thought it prudent to make complete submission and to avoid the question of responsibility for the War. But the latter, standing firmly on Wilson's promised Fourteen Points, wished to accept only what accorded with them, and was ready to raise the war-responsibility question if the peace terms were dependent upon it.

Arrived at Versailles, with their luggage dumped in the courtyard, the German delegation headed by Count Brockdorff-Rantzau was at first groping in the dark, not knowing the peace terms which were to be dictated. The Count had therefore prepared two alternative speeches for the difficult session at which he was to be given the text of the treaty. One was very short: "The fortune of war has gone against us, and we are ready to accept the conditions for which the preliminary negotiations have furnished the basis. We are prepared to go to the very limit of what is possible. . . ." But this speech was never delivered. Irritated by Clemenceau's uncompromising tone, by his allusion to the Franco-Prussian War, and by his dictum that there was to be no discussion of the dictated terms, Brockdorff-Rantzau read his second speech, longer and less submissive, touching on the question of war-responsibility and on the starvation of the German people by the continuation of the Allied blockade. Then followed his efforts, in the succeeding days, mostly without success, to obtain a discussion and modification of some of the most severe and humiliating terms. Finally, without agreeing to sign, he returned to Germany to consult the Cabinet.

At Weimar, where the Constitutional Assembly was sitting, there broke out anew the conflict between Erzberger, who favored acceptance of the treaty, and the German delegation which solidly advised its rejection. But Erzberger's hand was strengthened by two agents of Clemenceau, Professor Hesnard and Professor Haguenin, who gave Erzberger to understand that the peace conditions were not so hard as they seemed and might be ameliorated with time, and who at the same time encouraged Clemenceau by their secret reports to refuse any concessions which might facilitate German acceptance. So Erzberger won, Brockdorff-

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Rantzau resigned, and the new Cabinet and the Weimar Assembly agreed to accept the dictated treaty.

The translation is spirited and vivid and yet adheres closely to the German original, in fact sometimes too closely, as where it reproduces German mistakes like Withe, Meersen, Jishi, for White, Mersen, and Ishii. A good translator, besides knowing his languages, should know something of the subject he is translating.

SIDNEY B. FAY.

# Dangerous Talk

*Sleeveless Errand, by Norah C. James. New York: William Morrow and Company. $2.50.*

ON the night before the publication of this novel in England, last February, the London police raided the publisher's office, and, next morning, all the book shops which had bought advance orders of the book, confiscating every copy they could lay their hands on. We are indebted for this information to the American publishers, who do not give the grounds for this confiscation by the police, although we suppose that the reason, as usual, was that the book was considered a possible corrupter of the morals of youth. (The fact that, so far, the book has not invited similar action by the censors in these parts is an interesting sidelight on bureaucratic vagaries.) But there are other and much better grounds than obscenity upon which "Sleeveless Errand" might have been suppressed. No book, as far as I know, has ever yet been censored because it was an incitement to suicide; yet this strikes me as a sounder excuse than is usually offered. A really paternalistic government would prefer to have its citizens moved to parenthood (however accidental) rather than to deliberate self-destruction.

The theme of "Sleeveless Errand" is somewhat similar to Michael Arlen's "The Green Hat," but what sentimentality Miss James's book contains is of a less old-fashioned and more dangerous sort. The heroine in "The Green Hat" is an egg of such goodness that, even in calling her that, we must speak with harsh off-handedness, brushing away a tear—for really, like all madonnas, she is not of this earth. But Paula, the central figure in "Sleeveless Errand," reveals only a very distant cousinship to Sidney Carton. She, too, is a good egg, but her "spiritual purity" is not so highly touted as to arouse our suspicions.

The scene of the story is laid in present-day England, and the characters (with the exception of the hero) belong to the desperate, neurotic, semi-artistic set of London's young hopelesses. The hero, Bill, is a comparatively pedestrian and steady architect. He has just discovered that his wife is unfaithful, and is meditating suicide. At the same table in the coffee shop sits Laura, whose lover has just thrown her over, determined on the same thing. He follows her when she goes out; they talk; and the rest of the book is a history of their next thirty-six hours. She takes him to night clubs and restaurants, where they meet The Crowd; he spends the night with her, in the innocence of their mutual desperation; and the next day she hires a car and they set off for the coast, to the spot which she has chosen—a lonely road which ends at the cliff top.

The wonderful thing about Miss James's book is that it carries conviction. This rather ordinary story, with its course set about by pitfalls full of sentimentality and slop, has been guided so straightforwardly by its author, and with such intense urgency, that it rarely wavers. Paula and Bill are both sorry for themselves, as most of us are when we are having a very bad time; by their own reasoning, they should both die; but in Bill's case it would have been only a peevish gesture. For Paula, it is the only thing left to do. Hers is not the first suicide, in fact or fiction, whose inevitable logic we must admit, but in her case we feel more than a vague discomfort, for, as we read, we are moved by such sympathy that we are more than sorry for her.

There are not many people, perhaps, in an emotional state as intense and as despairing as Paula's; but there are undoubtedly many who fancy that they are; and there are more whose situation is so little different that it would not take much of a reminder to make them aware of it. There are, I know, a large class of readers (some of them young) who profess to find nothing either true or moving in such a book as "The Sun Also Rises." The same readers will profess the same lack of interest in "Sleeveless Errand." But there are many who will read and mark well this counsel of sincere despair; and that is why I have suggested that, from the social point of view at least, it may well be a dangerous book.

T. S. MATTHEWS.

# Are Dynamos Bosoms?

*Machinery, by MacKnight Black. New York: Horace Liveright. 80 pages. $2.*

"MACHINERY," a book of poems by Mr. MacKnight Black, reads like a futuristic manifesto, with its apotheosis of turbines, pistons, locomotive wheels, energy and speed. Only, in a sense, it has come too late; too late, we may say, because it is a manifesto, poetry with a purpose. Fifteen years or more back, when pronouncements like Dadaism, Expressionism, and Futurism were still being made with vigor and belief, we might have been caught off guard. Now, that is scarcely possible, and for that reason expressions of this kind can no longer have the element of surprise that we expect from a work of art. Then, as in all verse of this genre, where there appears to be an over-amount of purpose and persuasion, the value can be no more lasting than a political platform.

Perhaps, wherever there is given an undue attention to a certain set of facts, percepts, or materials, so that they stand out in bold relief as such, there must of necessity follow persuasive or too purposeful verse. In this same class may be cited poems to evolution, reincarnation, new discoveries, and now in this small volume the poetry of machine-splendor. All of them have gone the same way, to the literary junk yard, and not unjustly. In poems of this sort one feels that the poet errs more on the side of overstatement—we will not say misstatement—than anything else. I think the following, "New Mother," which is very typical of this book, is a pertinent instance.

> Dynamos are bosoms,
> Round with the sweet first-filling of a new mother's milk.
> The lowlands have fostered enough of sons, and the hills, and the sea.
> Now a strange mother with nipples of iron gives suck to a nation.
> At her side the young towns take strength on their lips.

This type of inversion is constant throughout Mr. Black's poems, always the interplay between nature and machines: one is transmuted into the other, nature metamorphosed into rivets and steel, and the same conversely. The heightened effect is non-human, and, to one no longer content with

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skyscraper glamor, appalling. Even Mr. Black recoils, and not as a robot, not as something non-human, in his Other Poems, when he says:

> I have died bitterly to myself
> And come into this fullness after desolation.

This sounds more like the motions of the heart than like those of a steam engine. More than that, it leads one to believe that when "this fullness," which has been gotten of iron nipples, is over and past, there will come another, which will have less to do with the mechanical world, with facile scene painting, and more with the human one. There is one more objection, and this one can lay at the door of many of our modern poets and writers, namely, that, with all their interest in skyscrapers, geometry as bodied forth in splendid bridges, and motor cars, they have paid such negligible attention to those who inhabit the first, built the second, and ride in the last. The result is a massive still-life. And I don't think this is a confrontation of what we call the American life any more than a studio set of a certain period is a reproduction of that period, historically. EDWARD DAHLBERG.

# André Gide in Africa

*Travels in the Congo, by André Gide. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 375 pages. $5.*

THERE is a malicious and melancholy pleasure in comparing the relative literary importance of a work such as this present volume, "Travels in the Congo," with the works of Mr. Martin Johnson, for example, on the eastern territory of Equatorial Africa. The latter will be much more popular than André Gide's journal of his trip to Lake Chad, but of the superior value to human thought of the Frenchman's observations there can be no doubt. And this is the opinion of a reviewer who has been unable, so far, to read "The Counterfeiters," in spite of numerous determined attempts!

M. Gide, the illustrious novelist of France, made a journey of some official significance, which is not adequately explained in the book. The jacket announcement, to which one naturally turns for this information, bears brief bibliographical data and many irrelevant particulars concerning M. Gide's forthcoming novel, "A School for Wives." But when a travel-book is priced at five dollars, the reader has a right to expect some attention to his ignorance of current French affairs. Throughout the reading of the book one is bothered by the failure to comprehend just how and why a novelist sixty years old, instead of arriving in New York to be fêted and lionized by intellectual America, goes on an official journey involving such singular hardships. And one regrets, in a book of nearly four hundred pages, the lack of an index to locate the innumerable references. It may seem captious, but when the average intelligent citizen pays a good price for a book, he can dispense with "a note on the type in which this book is set up." But if he have any vital interest at all in the subject or the author of such a book, he will want an index.

The point of these criticisms, of course, is that the book of M. Gide is important. It is the production of a first-class European mind. M. Gide says memorable things, and his fellow traveler makes delightful and arresting photographs. But the publishers are in error when they imply that "Travels in the Congo" depends for its value upon "simple truth" about this particular part of the African scene. What holds us is the spectacle of an intensely alive and complex modern intelligence in sudden contact with the lowest forms of human existence. "The simple truth" is rarely simple except to a simpleton. It is generally a compromise of general conclusions. This is apparent over and over again in M. Gide's daily record. The entries conflict one with another as he encounters conflicting evidence. And he sets it all down.

It is fascinating above all to read what André Gide is reading and his comments thereon. He delivers himself of a critical review of Bossuet's funeral orations. He enjoys "The Master of Ballantrae." He toys with the idea of translating "Mark Rutherford." He explores once more that superb masterpiece, "Heart of Darkness," as who would not on such a journey? Browning and Milton are enjoyed critically and even emotionally. Arnold Bennett's "Old Wives' Tale" is reread. And as he reaches "a flood of newspapers and reviews" on his homeward trek, he plunges in and discusses *"la poésie pure,"* corrects a "celebrated novelist" who misquotes Baudelaire in L'Illustration, and deplores "the confusion of styles." And he learns, "from a few slating articles," that his own great work, "The Counterfeiters," has at last come out.

This book is too long. It should have been edited. And yet, one pauses to reflect, is it not better untouched? André Gide grows on one. His is a profound and charming personality. There is no help for it. "The Counterfeiters" must be tackled again! WILLIAM MCFEE.

*Strange Moon, by T. S. Stribling. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.*

THIS is a comic-opera account of how the Americans drill the South Americans, and *vice versa,* for oil. Here we have pace and just enough verisimilitude injected into the comic passages to make them really funny. The manners of the people, both aristocrats and peons, and the luster of the scenery, vegetation and atmosphere of Venezuela come easily to Mr. Stribling. If he is not altogether literate all of the time, if he insists several times in a short page on calling a fencing foil an *épée,* if he is sometimes stilted, you will have to forgive him. He is engaged in writing piffle. He knows it. But he knows how to do it. "Strange Moon" is first-class resort reading. We are amused. C. A. C.

## Contributors

R. L. DUFFUS, a well known journalist, is the author of several books, of which the most recent is a novel, "Tomorrow Never Comes."

MALCOLM COWLEY is an essayist, poet and translator. One of his most important translations was of Paul Valéry's "Variété."

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